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DIARY
OF
A LATE PHYSICIAN.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

PASSAGES

FROM THE



DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

BY

SAMUEL WARREN, F.R.S.

"What is nearest us, touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies."—DR JOHNSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, EDINBURGH;

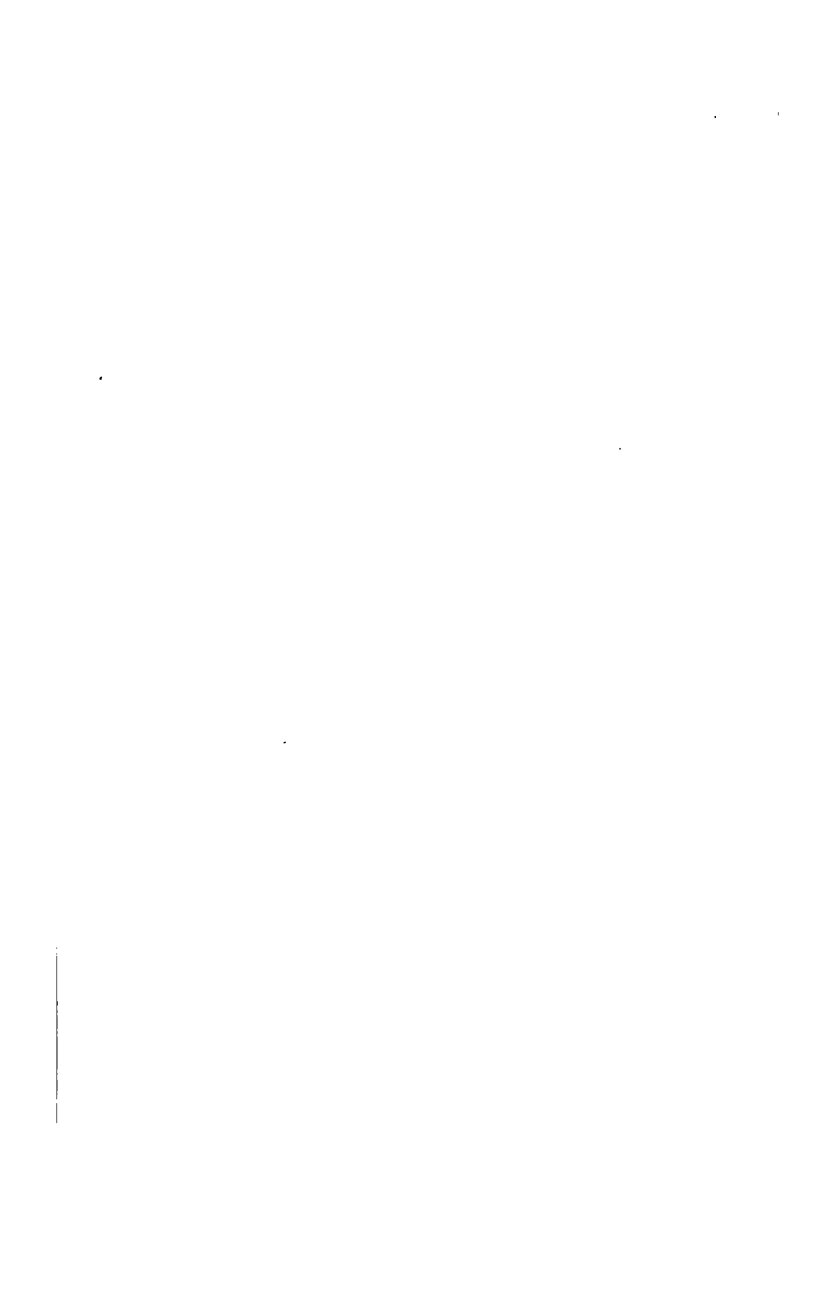
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PREFACE.

THE first chapter of these "*Passages from the Diary of a late Physician*" appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in August 1830, and the last in August 1837. The first separate publication of them, in two volumes, took place in 1832; between which period and the present, four very large impressions of them have been exhausted; and it is great satisfaction both to my publisher and myself, to find that this has been effected without, in any way, had recourse to the modern system of *puffing*; that miserable source of the degradation of literature. A fifth edition having been ordered for, is accompanied by the Third Volume, which contains all the chapters that have since made their appearance in Blackwood's Magazine.

As it lately became necessary, in the course of the law proceedings instituted by Mr Blackwood against parties who had pirated considerable portions of this work, that I should make oath of the fact of my being the sole author of it; and as

it has been, both at home and abroad, long confidently attributed to other people—I now repeat the statement, that I am the sole author of every portion of the work, and, in deference to the wishes of my family, place my name, as such author, upon the title-page.* It is not necessary to trouble the reader with the reasons that induced me so long to abstain from doing so.

To account for any appearance of familiarity with medical details in this work, I may add, that I was for six years actively engaged in the practical study of physic—a profession, however, which I quitted in the month of September, 1827.

It may, perhaps, be not uninteresting to the reader—merely, however, as a matter of petty literary detail—to be informed, that the first chapter of this “Diary”—the *Early Struggles*—was offered by me successively to the conductors of three leading magazines in London, and rejected, as “unsuitable for their pages,” and “not likely to interest the public.” In despair I bethought myself of the Great Northern Magazine. I remember taking my packet to Mr Cadell’s, in the Strand, with a sad suspicion that I should never see or

* In three foreign editions of the “Diary,” the name of “Dr HARRISON” is placed upon the title-page; in England several persons have actually stated themselves to be the writers of this work; others, that they have contributed towards it. I need hardly say, that all such statements are entirely untrue.

hear any thing more of it : but at the close of the month I received a letter from Mr Blackwood, informing me that he had inserted the chapter, and begging me to make arrangements for immediately proceeding regularly with the series. It expressed his cordial approval of the first chapter, and predicted that I was likely to produce a series of papers well suited for his Magazine, and calculated to interest the public. It would be great affectation in me, and ingratitude towards the public, were I to conceal my belief that his expectations have been in some degree verified by the event. Here I wish to pay a brief and sincere tribute to the memory of my late friend, Mr Blackwood. I shall ever cherish it with respect and affection. I have this morning been referring to nearly fifty letters which he wrote to me during the publication of the first Fifteen Chapters of the "Diary." The perusal of them has occasioned lively emotion. All of them evidence the remarkable tact and energy with which he conducted the celebrated Magazine. Harassing as were his labours at the close of every month, he nevertheless invariably wrote to me a letter of considerable length, in style terse, vigorous, and accurate—full of interesting comments on literary matters in general, and instructive suggestions concerning my papers in particular. He was a man of strong

intellect, of great practical sagacity, of unrivalled energy and industry, of high and inflexible honour in every transaction, great or small, that I ever heard of his being concerned in. But for him, this Work would certainly never have been in existence; and should it be so fortunate as *to live*, I wish it ever to be accompanied by the tribute I here sincerely and spontaneously pay to the memory of my departed friend, William Blackwood.

I hope I may be permitted to add a word or two concerning the general nature of this Work, and my design in writing it. I never desired to count myself among the myriad *novelists* of the present age. Even were I able, I have no ambition to attempt such a thing; all I wished was to present some of the results of my own personal observation of life and character in their most striking exemplification—to illustrate, as it were, the real practical working of virtues and vices. With this view I have ever, of set purpose, selected the most ordinary incidents, the simplest combinations of circumstances; never attempting to disturb or complicate the developement of character and of feeling with intricacy of plot, or novelty of incident. To this plan I have steadily adhered throughout the Work, and I hope it has gained the approbation of sober and judicious readers.—I trust I shall be pardoned, and not treated as vain or egotistical, if

I venture to extract the following passages from the "Preface by the Translator," prefixed to the German edition of this Work, as they have greatly gratified *me*, and also given that particular *character* to my labours which I have always been so anxious to vindicate for them :—

"This Work is such an unusual literary production, that even on that account a translation of it into German can by no means appear an unworthy undertaking. A further and better acquaintance with the original has strengthened the translator in his purpose and has also convinced him of the merits of these 'Passages.' Indeed, he is now of opinion that this Work, though at first sight, perhaps, appearing to belong to the class of amusing literature, far distinguishes itself, by its intrinsic worth, from the usual run of fashionable literary productions. It contains a series of psychological sketches of human nature in various conditions, and especially in the last moments of life. * * * They bear on them the undoubted stamp of *genuineness*; and the reflecting reader must be convinced, by the many characteristic touches with which most of them abound, that these narratives are at least *founded* upon truth; he will further feel persuaded that facts—*facts* witnessed by the author, are related—though, undoubtedly, here and there the reality has been coloured and veiled by a fiction-

like dress. * * * Although those narratives are, for the most part, of a peculiarly melancholy cast, and although, perhaps, we might have wished that the author had more spared the feelings of his readers, and that many close dissections of human misery had been omitted; yet it must be owned that even the most gloomy and heart-rending parts of these sketches are rich in thrilling situations and psychological perceptions—that a bright fountain of advice and warning springs from them all. The tendency of his work is throughout pure and moral; which must secure for him the most grateful acknowledgments from such even of his readers (amongst whom the translator is bound to place himself) as cannot perfectly agree in the strict religious opinions of the author. * * * The translation has been made with the greatest accuracy; and, with the exception of a few polemical observations, nothing is altered.”

I certainly feel much gratified by the approbation of my labours here expressed; but am quite at a loss to divine what can be the “*religious opinions*” from which such a translator would dissent, or the “*polemical observations*” he has found it necessary to suppress. Being a firm believer in Christianity—a conscientious member of the Church of England—I hope and believe that nothing will be found in this book inconsistent with such an avowal.

I do not intend to vindicate my selection of characters, scenes, and incidents. Some of them have been pretty freely remarked upon by the press ;—all I can say, however, being that my aim has been in every case for the best. One or two exceedingly severe, perhaps I might add, wanton and malignant attacks, have been made upon some of them ; but I heartily forgive those who have done so, whoever they may be. In conclusion, I know, alas ! that this work has many imperfections ; but it has been too long in too many forms before the world for me to attempt, even were I so disposed, extensive alterations. Such as it is, I now finally commit it, in this its complete and authentic form, to the judgment of the public, very thankful for their approbation, and deferential to their censure. The duties of a laborious profession *may* not admit of my making any further contributions to literature, or I might, perhaps, attempt to prove myself worthier of the favour I have experienced, and cheerfully exclaim,

“ To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new ! ”

SAMUEL WARREN.

INNER TEMPLE, London, 31st Oct. 1837.

DIARY

OF

A LATE PHYSICIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE THUNDER-STRUCK.—THE BOXER.*

IN the summer of 18—, London was visited by one of the most tremendous thunder-storms that have been known in this climate. Its character and effects—some of which latter form the subject of this chapter—will make me remember it to the latest hour of my life.

There was something portentous—a still, surcharged air—about the whole of Tuesday the 10th of July, 18—, as though nature were trembling and cowering beneath a common shock. In the exquisite language of one of our old dramatists,† there seemed

* This is a narrative—for obvious reasons somewhat varied in circumstances—of a lamentable occurrence in the author's family. About fourteen years ago, a very beautiful girl, eighteen years old, terrified at a violent thunder-storm, rushed into a cellar to escape, as she thought, from the danger, and was found there in the state described in the text. She died four days afterwards.

† Marlow.

——“ A calm
Before a tempest, when the gentle air
Lays her soft ear close to the earth, to listen
For that she fears steals on to ravish her.”

From about eleven o'clock at noon the sky wore a lurid threatening aspect that shot awe into the beholder ; suggesting to startled fancy the notion that within the dim confines of the “labouring air,” mischief was working to the world.

The heat was intolerable, keeping almost every body within doors. The dogs, and other cattle in the streets, stood every where panting and loath to move. There was no small excitement, or rather agitation, diffused throughout the country, especially London ; for, strange to say (and many must recollect the circumstance), it had been for some time confidently foretold by certain enthusiasts, religious as well as philosophic, that the earth was to be destroyed that very day ; in short, that the tremendous JUDGMENT was at hand ! Though not myself over credulous, or given to superstitious fears, I own that on coupling these fearful predictions with the unusual, and almost preternatural aspect of the day, I more than once experienced sudden qualms of apprehension as I rode along on my daily rounds. I did not so much communicate alarm to the various circles I entered, as catch it from them. Then, again, I would occasionally pass a silent group of passengers clustering round a street-preacher, who, true to his vocation, “redeeming the time,” seemed by his gestures, and the disturbed countenances around him, to be foretelling all that was frightful. The tone of excitement which pervaded my feelings was further heightened by a conversation on the prevail-

ing topic which I had in the course of the morning with the distinguished poet and scholar, Mr——. With what fearful force did he suggest possibilities; what vivid, startling colouring did he throw over them! It was, indeed, a topic congenial to his gloomy imagination. He talked to me, in short, till my disturbed fancy began to realize the wildest chimeras.

“Great God, Dr——!” said he, laying his hand suddenly on my arm, his great black eyes gleaming with mysterious awe—“Think, only think! What if, at the moment we are talking together, a comet, whose track the peering eye of science has never traced—whose very existence is known to none but God, is winging its fiery way towards our earth, swift as the lightning, and with force inevitable! Is it at this instant dashing to fragments some mighty orb that obstructed its progress, and then passing on towards us, disturbing system after system in its way?—How—when will the frightful crash be felt? Is its heat now blighting our atmosphere?—Will combustion first commence, or shall we be at once split asunder into innumerable fragments, and sent drifting through infinite space?—Whither—whither shall we fly! what must become of our species?—Is the Scriptural JUDGMENT then coming?—Oh, Doctor, what if all these things *are really at hand?*”

Was this imaginative raving calculated to calm one's feelings?—By the time I reached home, late in the afternoon, I felt in a fever of excitement. I found an air of apprehension throughout the whole house. My wife, children, and a young lady, a visiter, were all together in the parlour, looking out for me, through the window, anxiously—and with paler faces than they perhaps were

aware of. The visiter just alluded to, by the way, was a Miss Agnes P——, a girl of about twenty-one, the daughter of an old friend and patient of mine. Her mother, a widow (with no other child than this), resided in a village about fifty miles from town—from which she was expected, in a few days' time, to take her daughter back again into the country. Miss P—— was a very charming young woman. There was a softness of expression about her delicate features, that in my opinion constitutes the highest style of feminine loveliness. Her dark, pensive, searching eyes, spoke a soul full of feeling. The tones of her voice, mellow and various—and her whole carriage and demeanour, were in accordance with the expression of her features. In person she was about the average height, and perfectly well moulded and proportioned; and there was a Hebe-like ease and grace about all her gestures. She excelled in most feminine accomplishments; but her favourite objects were music and romance. A more imaginative creature was surely never known. It required all the fond and anxious surveillance of her friends to prevent her carrying her tastes to excess, and becoming, in a manner, unfitted for the “dull commerce of a duller earth!”

No sooner had this young lady made her appearance in my house, and given token of something like a prolonged stay, than I became the most popular man in the circle of my acquaintance. Such assiduous calls to enquire after *my* health, and that of my family!—Such a multitude of men—young ones, to boot—and so embarrassed with a consciousness of the poorness of the pretence that drew them to my house! Such matronly enquiries from mothers and elderly female relatives, into the na-

ture and extent of "sweet Miss P——'s expectations!" During a former stay at my house, about six months before the period of which I am writing, Miss P—— surrendered her affections—(to the delighted surprise of all her friends and relatives)—to the quietest, and perhaps worthiest of her claimants—a young man, then preparing for orders at Oxford. Never, sure, was there a greater contrast between the tastes of a pledged couple; she all feeling, romance, enthusiasm; he serene, thoughtful, and matter-of-fact. It was most amusing to witness their occasional collisions on subjects which developed their respective tastes and qualities; and interesting to note that the effect was invariably to raise the one in the other's estimation—as if each prized most the qualities of the other. Young N—— had spent two days in London—the greater portion of them, I need hardly say, at my house—about a week before the period of which I am writing; and he and his fair mistress had disputed rather keenly on the topic of general discussion—the predicted event of the 10th of July. If she did not repose implicit faith in the prophecy, her belief had, somehow or another, acquired a most disturbing strength. He laboured hard to disabuse her of her awful apprehensions—and she as hard to overcome his obstinate incredulity. Each was a little too eager about the matter: and, for the first time since they had known each other, they parted with a *little* coldness—yes, although he was to set off the next morning for Oxford! In short, scarcely any thing was talked about by Agnes but the coming 10th of July; and if she did not anticipate the actual destruction of the globe, and the final judgment of mankind—she at least looked forward to some event, myste-

rious and tremendous. The eloquent enthusiastic creature almost brought over my placid, little matter-of-fact wife to her way of thinking!—

To return from this long digression—which, however, will be presently found to have been not unnecessary. After staying a few minutes in the parlour, I retired to my library, for the purpose, among other things, of making those entries in my Diary, from which these “*Passages*” are taken—but the pen lay useless in my hand. With my chin resting on the palm of my left hand, I sat at my desk lost in a reverie; my eyes fixed on the tree which grew in the yard and overshadowed my windows. How still—how motionless was every leaf! What sultry—oppressive—*unusual* repose! How it would have cheered me to hear the faintest “sough” of wind—to see the breeze sweep freshening through the leaves, rustling and stirring them into life!—I opened my window, untied my neckerchief, and loosened my shirt collar—for I felt suffocated with the heat. I heard at length a faint pattering sound among the leaves of the tree—and presently there fell on the window-frame three or four large ominous drops of rain. After gazing upwards for a moment or two on the gloomy aspect of the sky—I once more settled down to writing; and was dipping my pen into the inkstand, when there blazed about me, a flash of lightning with such a ghastly, blinding splendour, as defies all description. It was like what one might conceive to be a glimpse of hell—and yet not a *glimpse* merely—for it continued, I think, six or seven seconds. It was followed, at scarce an instant’s interval, with a crash of thunder as if the world had been smitten out of its sphere, and was rending asunder!—I hope

these expressions will not be considered hyperbolic. No one, I am sure, who recollects the occurrence I am describing, will require the appeal!—May *I* never see or hear the like again! I leaped from my chair with consternation; and could think of nothing, at the moment, but closing my eyes, and shutting out from my ears the stunning sound of the thunder.* For a moment I stood literally stupified. On recovering myself, my first impulse was to spring to the door, and rush down stairs in search of my wife and children. I heard, on my way, the sound of shrieking proceed from the parlour in which I had left them. In a moment I had my wife folded in

* The following fine description of a storm at sea, is to be found in Mr James Montgomery's "*Pelican Island*." I shall, I hope, be excused for transcribing it, as I believe it is not very generally known :—

“ Dreary and hollow moans foretold a gale ;
 Nor long the issue tarried ; then the wind,
 Unprison'd, blew its trumpet loud and shrill ;
 Out flash'd the lightnings gloriously ; the rain
 Came down like music, and the full-toned thunder
 Roll'd in grand harmony throughout high heaven :
 Till ocean, breaking from his black supineness,
 Drown'd in his own stupendous uproar all
 The voices of the storm beside ; mean-while
 A war of mountains raged upon his surface ;
 Mountains each other swallowing, and again
 New Alps and Andes, from unfathom'd valleys
 Upstarting, join'd the battle ; like those sons
 Of earth,—giants, rebounding as new-born
 From every fall on their unwearied mother.
 I glow'd with all the rapture of the strife :
 Beneath was one wild whirl of foaming surges ;
 Above the array of lightnings, like the swords
 Of cherubim, wide brandish'd, to repel
 Aggression from heaven's gates ; their flaming strokes
 Quench'd momentarily in the vast abyss.”

my arms, and my children clinging with screams round my knees. My wife had fainted. While I was endeavouring to restore her, there came a second flash of lightning, equally terrible with the first—and a second explosion of thunder, loud as one could imagine the discharge of a thousand parks of artillery directly over head. The windows—in fact the whole house quivered with the shock. The noise helped to recover my wife from her swoon.

“Kneel down! Love! Husband!”—she gasped, endeavouring to drop upon her knees—“Kneel down! Pray—pray for us! *It is at hand!*” After shouting several times pretty loudly, and pulling the bell repeatedly and violently, one of the servants made her appearance—but evidently terrified and bewildered. She and her mistress, however, recovered themselves in a few minutes, roused by the cries of the children. “Wait a moment, love,” said I, “and I will bring you a little sal-volatile!”—I stepped into the back-room, where I generally kept a few phials of drugs,—and poured out what I wanted. The thought then for the first time struck me, that I had not seen Miss P—— in the parlour I had just quitted. *Where* was she? What would *she* say to all this?—God bless me, where is she?—I thought with increasing trepidation.

“Edward—Edward,” I exclaimed, to a servant who happened to pass the door of the room where I was standing; “where’s Miss P——?”

“Miss P——, sir!—Why—I don’t—oh, yes!” he replied, suddenly recollecting himself, “about five minutes ago I saw her run very quickly up stairs, and haven’t seen her since, sir.”—“What!” I exclaimed with

increasing trepidation, "was it about the time that the first flash of lightning came?"—"Yes, it was, sir!"—"Take this in to your mistress, and say I'll be with her immediately," said I, giving him what I had mixed. I rushed up stairs, calling out as I went, "Agnes! Agnes! where are you?" I received no answer. At length I reached the floor where her bedroom lay. The door was closed, but not shut.

"Agnes! Where are you?" I enquired very agitatedly, at the same time knocking at her door. I received no answer.

"Agnes! Agnes! For God's sake speak!—Speak, or I shall come into your room!" No reply was made; and I thrust open the door. Heavens! Can I describe what I saw!

Within less than a yard of me stood the most fearful figure my eyes have ever beheld. It was Agnes!—She was in the attitude of stepping to the door, with both arms extended. Her hair was partially dishevelled. Her face seemed whiter than the white dress she wore. Her lips were of a livid hue. Her eyes, full of awful expression, were fixed with a petrifying stare on me. Oh, language fails me—utterly!—Those eyes have seldom since been absent from me when alone! I strove to speak—but could not utter a sound. My lips seemed rigid as those I looked at. The horrors of nightmare seemed upon me. My eyes at length closed; my head seemed turning round—and for a moment or two I lost all consciousness. I revived. *There* was the frightful thing still before me—nay, close to me! Though I looked at her, I never once thought of Agnes P——. It was the tremendous appearance—the in-

effable terror gleaming from her eyes, that thus overcame me. I protest I cannot conceive any thing more dreadful ! Miss P—— continued standing perfectly motionless ; and while I was gazing at her in the manner I have been describing, a peal of thunder roused me to my self-possession. I stepped towards her, took hold of her hand, exclaiming “ Agnes—Agnes ! ”—and carried her to the bed, where I laid her down. It required some little force to press down her arms ; and I drew the eyelids over her staring eyes mechanically. While in the act of doing so, a flash of lightning flickered luridly over her—but her eye neither quivered nor blinked. She seemed to have been suddenly deprived of all sense and motion : in fact, nothing but her pulse—if pulse it should be called—and faint breathing, showed that she lived. My eye wandered over her whole figure, dreading to meet some scorching trace of lightning—but there was nothing of the kind. What had happened to her ? Was she frightened—to death ? I spoke to her ; I called her by her name, loudly ; I shook her, rather violently : I might have acted it all to a statue !—I rang the chamber-bell with almost frantic violence : and presently my wife and a female servant made their appearance in the room ; but I was far more embarrassed than assisted by their presence. “ Is she killed ? ” murmured the former, as she staggered towards the bed, and then clung convulsively to me—“ Has the lightning struck her ? ”

I was compelled to disengage myself from her grasp, and hurry her into the adjoining room—whither I called a servant to attend to her ; and then returned to my hapless patient. But what was I to do ? Medical man

as I was, I never had seen a patient in such circumstances, and felt as ignorant on the subject, as agitated. It was not epilepsy—it was not apoplexy—a swoon—nor any known species of hysteria. The most remarkable feature of her case, and what enabled me to ascertain the nature of her disease, was this; that if I happened accidentally to alter the position of her limbs, they retained, for a short time, their new position. If, for instance, I moved her arm—it remained for a while in the situation in which I had last placed it, and gradually resumed its former one. If I raised her into an upright posture she continued sitting so without the support of pillows, or other assistance, as exactly as if she had heard me express a wish to that effect, and assented to it; but,—the horrid vacancy of her aspect! If I elevated one eyelid for a moment, to examine the state of the eye, it was some time in closing, unless I drew it over myself. All these circumstances,—which terrified the servant who stood shaking at my elbow, and muttering, “She’s possessed! she’s possessed!—Satan has her!”—convinced me at length, that the unfortunate girl was seized with CATALEPSY; that rare mysterious affection, so fearfully blending the conditions of life and death—presenting—so to speak—life in the aspect of death, and death in that of life! I felt no doubt, that extreme terror operating suddenly on a nervous system most highly excited, and a vivid, active fancy, had produced the effects I saw. Doubtless the first terrible outbreak of the thunder-storm—especially the fierce splendour of that first flash of lightning which so alarmed myself—apparently corroborating and realizing all her awful apprehensions of the predicted event, overpowered her

at once, and flung her into the fearful situation in which I found her—that of one ARRESTED in her terror-struck flight towards the door of her chamber. But again—the thought struck me—had she received any direct injury from the lightning? Had it blinded her? It might be so—for I could make no impression on the pupils of the eyes. Nothing could startle them into action. They seemed a little more dilated than usual, and fixed.

I confess that, besides the other agitating circumstances of the moment, this extraordinary, this unprecedented case too much distracted my self-possession to enable me promptly to deal with it. I had heard and read of, but never before seen such a case. No time, however, was to be lost. I determined to resort at once to strong antispasmodic treatment. I bled her from the arm freely, applied blisters behind the ears, immersed her feet, which, together with her hands, were cold as those of a statue, in hot water, and endeavoured to force into her mouth a little opium and ether. Whilst the servants were busied about her, undressing her, and carrying my directions into effect, I stepped for a moment into the adjoining room, where I found my wife just recovering from a violent fit of hysterics. Her loud laughter, though so near me, I had not once heard, so absorbed was I with the mournful case of Miss P——. After continuing with her till she recovered sufficiently to accompany me down stairs, I returned to Miss P——'s bedroom. She continued exactly in the condition in which I had left her. Though the water was hot enough almost to parboil her tender feet it produced no sensible effect on the circulation, or the state of the skin ;

and finding a strong determination of blood towards the regions of the head and neck, I determined to have her cupped between the shoulders. I went down stairs to drop a line to the apothecary, requesting him to come immediately with his cupping instruments. As I was delivering the note into the hands of a servant, a man rushed up to the open door where I was standing, and, breathless with haste, begged my instant attendance on a patient close by, who had just met with a severe accident. Relying on the immediate arrival of Mr —, the apothecary, I put on my hat and great-coat, took my umbrella, and followed the man who had summoned me out. It rained in torrents, for the storm, after about twenty minutes' intermission, burst forth again with unabated violence. The thunder and lightning, peal upon peal—blaze upon blaze, were really terrific!

THE BOXER.

The patient who thus abruptly, and, under circumstances, inopportunately, required my services, proved to be one Bill —, a notorious boxer, who, in returning that evening from a great prize-fight, had been thrown out of his gig, the horse having been frightened by the lightning, and the rider, who was much the worse for liquor, had his ankle dreadfully dislocated. He had been taken up by some passengers, and conveyed with great difficulty to his own residence, a public-house, not three minutes' walk from where I lived. The moment I entered the tap-room, which I had to pass on my way to the staircase, I heard his groans, or rather howls, over head.

The excitement of intoxication, added to the agonies occasioned by his accident, had driven him, I was told, nearly mad. He was uttering the most revolting execrations as I entered his room. He damned himself—his ill-luck (for it seemed he had lost considerable sums on the fight)—the combatants—the horse that threw him—the thunder and lightning—every thing, in short, and every body about him. The sound of the thunder was sublime melody to me, and the more welcome, because it drowned the blasphemous bellowing of the monster I was visiting. Yes—there lay the burly boxer, stretched upon the bed, with none of his dress removed, except the boot, which had been cut from the limb that was injured—his new blue coat, with glaring yellow buttons, and drab knee-breeches, soiled with the street mud into which he had been precipitated—his huge limbs, writhing in restless agony over the bed—his fists clenched, and his flat, iron-featured face swollen and distorted with pain and fury.

“But, my good woman,” said I, pausing at the door, addressing myself to the boxer’s wife, who, wringing her hands, had conducted me up stairs; “I assure you, I am not the person you should have sent to. It’s a surgeon’s, not a physician’s case; I fear I can’t do much for him—quite out of my way”——

“Oh, for God’s sake—for the love of God, don’t say so!” gasped the poor creature, with affrighted emphasis—“oh, do *something* for him, or he’ll drive us all out of our senses—he’ll be killing us!”

“Do something!” roared my patient, who had overheard the last words of his wife, turning his bloated face towards me—“do something, indeed? ay, and be ——

to you ! Here, here—look ye, Doctor—look ye, *here* !” he continued, pointing to the wounded foot, which, all crushed and displaced, and the stocking soaked with blood, presented a shocking appearance—“look here, indeed !—ah, that —— horse ! that —— horse !” his teeth gnashed, and his right hand was lifted up, clenched, with fury—“If I don’t break every bone in his —— body, as soon as ever I can stir this cursed leg again !”

I felt for a moment as though I had entered the very pit and presence of Satan, for the lightning was gleaming over his ruffianly figure incessantly, and the thunder rolling close overhead while he was speaking.

“Hush ! hush ! you’ll drive the doctor away ! For pity’s sake hold your tongue, or Doctor —— won’t come into the room to you !” gasped his wife, dropping on her knees beside him.

“Ha, ha ! Let him go ! Only let him stir a step, and lame as I am, —— me if I don’t jump out of bed, and teach him civility ! *Here*, you doctor, as you call yourself ! What’s to be done ?” Really I was too much shocked, at the moment, to know. I was half inclined to leave the room immediately—and had a fair plea for doing so in the *surgical* nature of the case—but the agony of the fellow’s wife induced me to check my outraged feelings, and stay. After directing a person to be sent off, in my name, for the nearest surgeon, I addressed myself to my task, and proceeded to remove the stocking. His whole body quivered with the anguish it occasioned ; and I saw such fury gathering in his features, that I began to dread lest he might rise up in a sudden frenzy, and strike me.

" Oh! oh! oh!—Curse your clumsy hands! You don't know no more nor a child," he groaned, " what you're about! Leave it—leave it alone! Give over with ye! Doctor, —, I say, be off!"

" Mercy, mercy, Doctor!" sobbed his wife in a whisper, fearing, from my momentary pause, that I was going to take her husband at his word—" Don't go away!—Oh, go on—go on! It *must* be done, you know! Never mind what he says! He's only a little the worse for liquor now—and—and then the *pain*! Go on, Doctor! He'll thank you the more for it to-morrow!"

" Wife! Here!" shouted her husband. The woman instantly stepped up to him. He stretched out his Herculean arm, and grasped her by the shoulder.

" So—you —! I'm drunk, am I? I'm *drunk*, eh —you lying —!" he exclaimed, and jerked her violently away, right across the room, to the door, where the poor creature fell down, but presently rose, crying bitterly.

" Get away! Get off—get down stairs—if you don't want me to serve you the same again! Say I'm drunk —you beast?" With frantic gestures she obeyed—rushed down stairs—and I was left alone with her husband. I was disposed to follow her abruptly, but the positive dread of my life (for he might leap out of the bed and kill me with a blow), kept me to my task. My flesh crept with disgust at touching his! I examined the wound which undoubtedly must have given him torture enough to drive him mad, and bathed it in warm water; resolved to pay no attention to his abuse, and quit the instant that the surgeon, who had been sent for, made his appearance. At length he came. I breathed

more freely, resigned the case into his hands, and was going to take up my hat, when he begged me to continue in the room, with such an earnest apprehensive look, that I reluctantly remained. I saw he dreaded as much being left alone with his patient, as I! It need hardly be said that every step that was taken in dressing the wound, was attended with the vilest execrations of the patient. Such a foul-mouthed ruffian I never encountered any where. It seemed as though he was possessed of a devil. What a contrast to the sweet speechless sufferer whom I had left at home, and to whom my heart yearned to return!

The storm still continued raging. The rain had comparatively ceased, but the thunder and lightning made their appearance with fearful frequency and fierceness. I drew down the blind of the window, observing to the surgeon that the lightning seemed to startle our patient.

"Put it up again! Put up that blind again, I say!" he cried impatiently. "D'ye think *I'm* afeard of the lightning, like my — horse to day? Put it up again—or I'll get out and do it myself!" I did as he wished. Reproof or expostulation was useless. "Ha!" he exclaimed in a low tone of fury, rubbing his hands together—in a manner bathing them in the fiery stream, as a flash of lightning gleamed ruddily over him. "*There* it is!—Curse it—just the sort of flash that frightened my horse—d—— it!"—and the impious wretch shook his fist, and "grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

"Be silent, sir! Be silent! or we will both leave you instantly. Your behaviour is impious! It is frightful to witness! Forbear—lest the vengeance of God descend upon you!"

"Come, come—none o' your —— methodism *here*! Go on with your business! Stick to your trade," interrupted the Boxer.

"Does not *that* rebuke your blasphemies?" I enquired, suddenly shading my eyes from the vivid stream of lightning that burst into the room, while the thunder rattled overhead—evidently in most dreadful proximity. When I removed my hands from my eyes, and opened them, the first object that they fell upon was the figure of the Boxer, sitting upright in bed with both hands stretched out, just as those of Elymas the sorcerer, in the picture of Raphael—his face the colour of a corpse—and his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, directed with a horrid stare towards the window. His lips moved not—nor did he utter a sound. It was clear what had occurred. The wrathful fire of Heaven, that had glanced harmlessly around us, had blinded the blasphemer. Yes—the sight of his eyes had perished. While we were gazing at him in silent awe, he fell back in bed, speechless, and clasped his hands over his breast, seemingly in an attitude of despair. But for that motion, we should have thought him dead. Shocked beyond expression, Mr —— paused in his operations. I examined the eyes of the patient. The pupils were both dilated to their utmost extent, and immovable. I asked him many questions, but he answered not a word. Occasionally, however, a groan of horror—remorse—agony—(or all combined) would burst from his pent bosom; and this was the only evidence he gave of consciousness. He moved over on his right side—his "pale face turned to the wall"—and, unclasping his hands, pressed the fore-finger of each with convulsive force upon the eyes. Mr —— proceeded with his task

What a contrast between the present and past behaviour of our patient ! Do what we would—put him to never such great pain—he neither uttered a syllable, nor expressed any symptoms of passion, as before. There was, however, no necessity for my continuing any longer ; so I left the case in the hands of Mr —, who undertook to acquaint Mrs — with the frightful accident that had happened to her husband. What two scenes had I witnessed that evening !

I hurried home full of agitation at the spectacle I had just quitted, and melancholy apprehensions concerning the one to which I was returning. On reaching my lovely patient's room, I found, alas ! no sensible effects produced by the very active means which had been adopted. She lay in bed, the aspect of her features apparently the same as when I last saw her. Her eyes were closed—her cheeks very pale, and mouth rather open, as if she were on the point of speaking. The hair hung in a little disorder on each side of her face, having escaped from beneath her cap. My wife sat beside her, grasping her right hand—weeping and almost stupified ; and the servant that was in the room when I entered, seemed so bewildered as to be worse than useless. As it was now getting dark, I ordered candles. I took one of them in my hand, opened her eyelids, and passed and repassed the candle several times before her eyes, but it produced no apparent effect. Neither the eyelids blinked, nor the pupils contracted. I then took out my penknife, and made a thrust with the open blade, as though I intended to plunge it into her right eye ; it seemed as if I might have buried the blade in the socket,

for the shock or resistance called forth by the attempt. I took her hand in mine—having for a moment displaced my wife—and found it damp and cold ; but when I suddenly left it suspended, it continued so for a few moments, and only gradually resumed its former situation. I pressed the back of the blade of my pen-knife upon the flesh at the root of the nail (as every one knows, a very tender part), but she evinced not the slightest sensation of pain. I shouted suddenly and loudly in her ears, but with similar ill success. I felt at an extremity. Completely baffled at all points—discouraged and agitated beyond expression, I left Miss P—— in the care of a nurse, whom I had sent for to attend upon her, at the instance of my wife, and hastened to my study to see if my books could throw any light upon the nature of this, to me, new and inscrutable disorder. After hunting about for some time, and finding but little to the purpose, I prepared for bed, determining in the morning to send off for Miss P——’s mother, and Mr N—— from Oxford, and also to call upon my eminent friend Dr D——, and hear what his superior skill and experience might be able to suggest. In passing Miss P——’s room, I stepped in to take my farewell for the evening. “ Beautiful, unfortunate creature ! ” thought I, as I stood gazing mournfully on her, with my candle in my hand, leaning against the bed-post. “ What mystery is upon thee ? What awful change has come over thee ?—the gloom of the grave and the light of life—both lying upon thee at once ! Is thy mind palsied as thy body ? How long is this strange state to last ? How long art thou doomed to linger thus on the confines of both worlds, so that those in either, who love thee, may not claim thee ? Heaven

guide our thoughts to discover a remedy for thy fearful disorder!" I could not bear to look upon her any longer; and after kissing her lips, hurried up to bed, charging the nurse to summon me the moment that any change whatever was perceptible in Miss P——. I dare say, I shall be easily believed when I apprise the reader of the troubled night that followed such a troubled day. The thunder-storm itself, coupled with the predictions of the day, and apart from its attendant incidents that have been mentioned, was calculated to leave an awful and permanent impression in one's mind. "If I were to live a century, I could not forget it," said a distinguished writer in a letter to me. "The thunder and lightning were more appalling than I ever recollect witnessing, even in the West Indies—that region of storms and hurricanes. The air had been long surcharged with electricity; and I predicted several days beforehand, that we should have a storm of very unusual violence. But when with this we couple the strange prophecy that gained credit with a prodigious number of those one would have expected to be above such things—neither more nor less than that the world was to come to an end on that very day, and the judgment of mankind to follow; I say, the coincidence of the events was not a little singular, and calculated to inspire common folk with wonder and fear. I dare say, if one could but find them out, that there were instances of people frightened out of their wits on the occasion. I own to you candidly that I, for one, felt a little squeamish, and had not a little difficulty in bolstering up my courage with Virgil's *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*," &c.

I did not so much sleep as doze interruptedly for the

first three or four hours after getting into bed. I, as well as my alarmed Emily, would start up occasionally, and sit listening, under the apprehension that we heard a shriek, or some other such sound, proceed from Miss P——'s room. The image of the blinded Boxer flitted in fearful forms about me, and my ears seemed to ring with his curses.—It must have been, I should think, between two and three o'clock, when I dreamed that I leaped out of bed, under an impulse sudden as irresistible—slipped on my dressing-gown, and hurried down stairs to the back drawing-room. On opening the door, I found the room lit up with funeral tapers, and the apparel of a dead-room spread about. At the further end lay a coffin on trestles, covered with a long sheet, with the figure of an old woman sitting beside it, with long streaming white hair, and her eyes, bright as the lightning, directed towards me with a fiendish stare of exultation. Suddenly she rose up—pulled off the sheet that had covered the coffin—pushed aside the lid—plucked out the body of Miss P——, dashed it on the floor, and trampled upon it with apparent triumph! This horrid dream awoke me, and haunted my waking thoughts. May I never pass such a dismal night again!

I rose from bed in the morning feverish and unrefreshed; and in a few minutes' time hurried to Miss P——'s room. The mustard applications to the soles of the feet, together with the blisters behind the ears, had produced the usual local effects without affecting the complaint. Both her pulse and breathing continued calm. The only change perceptible in the colour of her countenance was a slight pallor about the upper part of the cheeks, and I fancied there was an expression about

her mouth approaching to a smile. She had, I found, continued, throughout the night, motionless and silent as a corpse. With a profound sigh I took my seat beside her, and examined the eyes narrowly, but perceived no change in them. What was to be done? How was she to be roused from this fearful—if not fatal lethargy?

While I was gazing intently on her features, I fancied that I perceived a slight muscular twitching about the nostrils. I stepped hastily down stairs (just as a drowning man, they say, catches at a straw) and returned with a phial of the strongest solution of ammonia,* which I applied freely with a feather to the interior of the nostrils. This attempt, also, was unsuccessful as the former ones. I cannot describe the feelings with which I witnessed these repeated failures to stimulate her torpid sensibilities into action: and not knowing what to say or do, I returned to dress, with feelings of unutterable despondency. While dressing, it struck me that a blister might be applied with success along the whole course of the spine. The more I thought of this expedient, the more feasible it appeared:—it would be such a direct and powerful appeal to the nervous system—in all probability the very seat and source of the disorder! I ordered one to be sent for instantly—and myself applied it, before I went down to breakfast. As soon as I had despatched the few morning patients that called, I wrote imperatively to Mr N—— at Oxford, and to Miss P——'s mother, entreating them by all the love they bore Agnes to come to her instantly. I then set out for Dr D——'s, whom I found just starting on his daily visits. I communicated the whole case

* Liquid smelling-salts.

to him. He listened with interest to my statement, and told me he had once a similar case in his own practice, which, alas! terminated fatally in spite of the most anxious and combined efforts of the *élite* of the faculty in London. He approved of the course I had adopted—most especially the blister on the spine; and earnestly recommended me to resort to galvanism—if Miss P—— should not be relieved from the fit before the evening—when he promised to call, and assist in carrying into effect what he recommended.

“Is it that beautiful girl I saw in your pew last Sunday, at church?” he enquired, suddenly.

“The same—the same!”—I replied with a sigh.

Dr D—— continued silent for a moment or two.

“Poor creature!” he exclaimed with an air of deep concern, “one so beautiful! Do you know I thought I now and then perceived a very remarkable expression in her eye, especially while that fine voluntary was playing. Is she an enthusiast about music?”

“Passionately—devotedly”——

“We’ll try it!” he replied briskly, with a confident air —“We’ll try it! First, let us disturb the nervous torpor with a slight shock of galvanism, and then try the effect of your organ.”* I listened to the suggestion with interest, but was not quite so sanguine in my expectations as my friend appeared to be.

In the whole range of disorders that affect the human frame, there is perhaps not one so mysterious, so incapable of management, as that which afflicted the truly unfortunate young lady whose case I am narrating. It

* I had at home—being myself a lover, though not a scientific one, of music—a very fine organ.

has given rise to infinite speculation, and is admitted, I believe, on all hands to be—if I may so speak—a nosological anomaly. Van Swieten vividly and picturesquely enough compares it to that condition of the body, which, according to ancient fiction, was produced in the beholder by the appalling sight of Medusa's head—

Saxifici Medusæ vultus."

The medical writers of antiquity have left evidence of the existence of this disease in their day—but given the most obscure and unsatisfactory descriptions of it, confounding it, in many instances, with other disorders—apoplexy, epilepsy, and swooning. Celsus, according to Van Swieten, describes such patients as these in question, under the term "*attoniti*," which is a translation of the title I have prefixed to this paper: while, in our own day, the celebrated Dr Cullen classes it as a species of apoplexy, at the same time stating that he had never seen a genuine instance of catalepsy. He had always found, he says, those cases which were reported such, to be feigned ones. More modern science, however, distinctly recognises the disease as one peculiar and independent; and is borne out by numerous unquestionable cases of catalepsy recorded by some of the most eminent members of the profession. Dr Jebb, in particular, in the appendix to his "*Select Cases of Paralysis of the Lower Extremities*," relates a remarkable and affecting instance of a cataleptic patient. As it is not likely that general readers have met with this interesting case, I shall here transcribe it. The young lady who was the subject of the disorder was seized with the fit when Dr Jebb was announced on his first visit.

“ She was employed in netting, and was passing the needle through the mesh ; in which position she immediately became rigid, exhibiting, in a very pleasing form, a figure of deathlike sleep, beyond the power of art to imitate, or the imagination to conceive. Her forehead was serene, her features perfectly composed. The paleness of her colour—her breathing being also scarcely perceptible at a distance—operated in rendering the similitude to marble more exact and striking. The position of the fingers, hands, and arms was altered with difficulty, but preserved every form of flexure they acquired. Nor were the muscles of the neck exempted from this law; her head maintaining every situation in which the hand could place it, as firmly as her limbs.

“ Upon gently raising the eyelids they immediately closed with a degree of spasm.* The iris contracted upon the approach of a candle, as in a state of vigilance. The eyeball itself was slightly agitated with a tremulous motion, not discernible when the eyelid had descended. About half an hour after my arrival, the rigidity of her limbs and statue-like appearance being yet unaltered, she sung three plaintive songs in a tone of voice so elegantly expressive, and with such affecting modulation, as evidently pointed out how much the most powerful passion of the mind was concerned in the production of her disorder ; as, indeed, her history confirmed. In a few minutes afterwards she sighed deeply, and the spasm in her limbs was immediately relaxed. She complained that she could not open her eyes, her hands grew cold, a general tremor

* This was not the case with Miss P——. I repeatedly remarked the perfect mobility of her eyelids.

followed ; but in a few seconds, recovering entirely her recollection and powers of motion, she entered into a detail of her symptoms, and the history of her complaint. After she had discoursed for some time with apparent calmness, the universal spasm suddenly returned. The features now assumed a different form, denoting a mind strongly impressed with anxiety and apprehension. At times she uttered short and vehement exclamations, in a piercing tone of voice, expressive of the passions that agitated her mind ; her hands being strongly locked in each other, and all her muscles, those subservient to speech excepted, being affected with the same rigidity as before."

But the most extraordinary case on record, is one* given by Dr Petetin, a physician of Lyons, in which "*the senses were transferred to the pit of the stomach, and the ends of the fingers and toes*—i. e. the patients, in a state of insensibility to all external impressions upon the proper organs of sense, were nevertheless capable of hearing, *seeing*, smelling, and tasting whatever was approached to the pit of the stomach, or the ends of the fingers and toes ! The patients are said to have answered questions proposed to the pit of the stomach—to have told the hour by a watch placed there—to have tasted food—and smelt the fragrance of apricots, touching the part, &c. &c." It may be interesting to add, that an eminent physician, who went to see the patient, incredulous of what he had heard, returned perfectly convinced of its truth. I have also read somewhere of

* A second similar case, well authenticated, occurred not long afterwards, at the same place.—They are attributed by Dr P. to the influence of animal electricity.

a Spanish monk, who was so terrified by a sudden sight which he encountered in the Asturias mountains, that, when several of his holy brethren, whom he had preceded a mile or two, came up, they found him stretched upon the ground in the fearful condition of a cataleptic patient. They carried him back immediately to their monastery, and he was believed dead. He suddenly revived, however, in the midst of his funeral obsequies, to the consternation of all around him. When he had perfectly recovered the use of his faculties, he related some absurd matters which he pretended to have seen in a vision during his comatose state. The disorder in question, however, generally makes its appearance in the female sex, and seems to be in many, if not in most instances, a remote member of the family of hysterical affections.—To return, however.

On returning home from my daily round—in which my dejected air was remarked by all the patients I had visited—I found no alteration whatever in Miss P——. The nurse had failed in forcing even arrow-root down her mouth, and, finding it was not swallowed, was compelled to desist, for fear of choking her. We were, therefore, obliged to resort to other means of conveying support to her exhausted frame. The blister on the spine, from which I had expected so much, and the renewed sinapisms to the feet, had failed to make any impression! Thus was every successive attempt an utter failure! The disorder continued absolutely inaccessible to the approaches of medicine. The baffled attendants could but look at her, and lament. Good God, was Agnes to continue in this dreadful condition till her energies sunk in death? What would become of her lover?

of her mother? These considerations greatly disturbed my peace of mind. I could neither think, read, eat, nor remain any where but in the chamber, where, alas! my presence was so unavailing!

Dr D—— made his appearance soon after dinner; and we proceeded at once to the room where our patient lay. Though a little paler than before, her features were placid as those of the chiselled marble. Notwithstanding all she had suffered, and the fearful situation in which she lay at that moment, she still looked very beautiful. Her cap was off, and her rich auburn hair lay negligently on each side of her, upon the pillow. Her forehead was white as alabaster. She lay with her head turned a little on one side, and her two small white hands were clasped together over her bosom. This was the nurse's arrangement: for "poor dear young lady," she said, "I couldn't bear to see her laid straight along, with her arms close beside her like a corpse, so I tried to make her look as much asleep as possible!" The impression of beauty, however, conveyed by her symmetrical and tranquil features, was disturbed as soon as, lifting up the eyelids, we saw the fixed stare of the eyes. They were not glassy or corpse-like, but bright as those of life, with a little of the dreadful expression of epilepsy. We raised her in bed, and she, as before, sat upright, but with a blank, absent aspect that was lamentable and unnatural. Her arms, when lifted and left suspended, did not fall, but *sunk* down again gradually. We returned her gently to her recumbent posture; and determined at once to try the effect of galvanism upon her. My machine was soon brought into the room; and when we had duly arranged matters, we directed the nurse to quit

the chamber for a short time, as the effect of galvanism is generally found too startling to be witnessed by a female spectator. I wish I had not myself seen it in the case of Miss P——! Her colour went and came—her eyelids and mouth started open—and she stared wildly about her with the aspect of one starting out of bed in a fright. I thought at one moment that the horrid spell was broken, for she sate up suddenly, leaned forwards towards me, and her mouth opened as though she were about to speak!

“Agnes! Agnes! dear Agnes! Speak, speak! but a word! Say you live!” I exclaimed, rushing forwards. Alas, she heard me—she saw me—not, but fell back in bed in her former state! When the galvanic shock was conveyed to her limbs, it produced the usual effects—dreadful to behold in all cases—but agonizing to me, in the case of Miss P——. The last subject on which I had seen the effects of galvanism, previous to the present instance, was the body of an executed malefactor;* and

* A word about that case, by the way, in passing. The spectacle was truly horrific. When I entered the room where the experiments were to take place, the body of a man named Carter, which had been cut down from the gallows scarce half an hour, was lying on the table; and the cap being removed, his features, distorted with the agonies of suffocation, were visible. The crime he had been hanged for, was murder; and a brawny, desperate ruffian he looked! None of his clothes were removed. He wore a fustian jacket, and drab knee-breeches. The first time that the galvanic shock was conveyed to him will never, I dare say, be forgotten by any one present. We all shrunk from the table in consternation, with the momentary belief that we had positively brought the man back to life; for he suddenly sprang up into a sitting posture—his arms waved wildly—the colour rushed into his cheeks—his lips were drawn apart, so as to show all his teeth—and his eyes glared at us with apparent fury. One young man, a medical student, shrieked

the associations revived on the present occasion were almost too painful to bear. I begged my friend to desist, for I saw the attempt was hopeless, and I would not allow her tender frame to be agitated to no purpose. My mind misgave me for ever making the attempt. What, thought I, if we have fatally disturbed the nervous system, and prostrated the small remains of strength she had left? While I was torturing myself with such fears as these, Dr —— laid down the rod, with a melancholy air, exclaiming—"Well! what is to be done now? I cannot tell you how sanguine I was about the success of this experiment! * * * Do you know whether she ever had a fit of epilepsy?" he enquired.

"No—not that I am aware of. I never heard of it, if she had."

"Had she generally a horror of thunder and lightning?"

"Oh—quite the contrary! she felt a sort of ecstasy on such occasions, and has written some beautiful verses during their continuance. *Such* seemed rather her hour of inspiration than otherwise!"

"Do you think the lightning itself has affected her? —Do you think her sight is destroyed?"

"I have no means of knowing whether the immobility of the pupils arises from blindness, or is only one of the temporary effects of catalepsy."

violently, and was carried out in a swoon. One gentleman present, who happened to be nearest to the upper part of the body, was almost knocked down with the violent blow he received from the left arm. It was some time before any of us could recover presence of mind sufficient to proceed with the experiments.

"Then she believed the prophecy, you think, of the world's destruction on Tuesday?"

"No.—I don't think she exactly *believed* it; but I am sure that day brought with it awful apprehensions—or at least, a fearful degree of uncertainty."

"Well—between ourselves, ——, there was something *very* strange in the coincidence, was not there? Nothing in life ever shook my firmness as it was shaken yesterday! I almost fancied the earth was quivering in its sphere!"

"It *was* a dreadful day! One I shall never forget!—*That* is the image of it," I exclaimed, pointing to the poor sufferer—"which will be engraven on my mind as long as I live!—But the worst is, perhaps, yet to be told you: Mr N——, her lover—to whom she was very soon to have been married,—HE will be here shortly to see her"——

"My God!" exclaimed Dr D—— clasping his hands, eyeing Miss P——, with intense commiseration,—
"What a fearful bride for him!"

"I dread his coming—I know not what we shall do!—And, then, there's her *mother*—poor old lady!—her I have written to, and expect almost hourly!"

"Why—what an accumulation of shocks and miseries! it will be upsetting *you*!"—said my friend, seeing my distressed appearance.

"Well!"—he continued—"I cannot now stay here longer—your misery is catching; and besides, I am most pressing engaged: but you may rely on my services, if you should require them in any way."

My friend took his departure, leaving me more disconsolate than ever. Before retiring to bed, I rubbed

is mustard upon the chief surfaces of the body, hoping—though faintly—that it might have some effect in rousing the system. I kneeled down, before stepping into bed, and earnestly prayed, that as all human efforts seemed baffled, the Almighty would set her free from the mortal thralldom in which she lay, and restore her to life, and those who loved her more than life ! Morning came—it found me by her bed-side as usual, and her, in no wise altered—apparently neither better nor worse ! If the unvarying monotony of my description should fatigue the reader—what must the actual monotony and hopelessness have been to me !

While I was sitting beside Miss P——, I heard my youngest boy come down stairs, and ask to be let into the room. He was a little fair-haired youngster, about three years of age,—and had always been an especial favourite of Miss P——’s—her “own sweet pet”—as the poor girl herself called him. Determined to throw no chance away, I beckoned him in, and took him on my knee. He called to Miss P——, as if he thought her asleep ; patted her face with his little hands, and kissed her. “Wake, wake !—Cousin Aggy—get up !”—he cried—“Papa say ’tis time to get up !—Do you sleep with eyes open ?*—Eh ?—Cousin Aggy ?” He looked at her intently for some moments—and seemed frightened. He turned pale, and struggled to get off my knee. I allowed him to go—and he ran to his mother, who was standing at the foot of the bed—and hid his face behind her.

* I had been examining her eyes, and had only half closed the lids.

I passed breakfast-time in great apprehension—expecting the two arrivals I have mentioned. I knew not how to prepare either the mother or the betrothed husband for the scene that awaited them, and which I had not particularly described to them. It was with no little trepidation that I heard the startling knock of the general postman; and with infinite astonishment and doubt that I took out of the servant's hands, a letter from Mr N——, for poor Agnes!—For a while I knew not what to make of it. Had he received the alarming express I had forwarded to him; and did he write to Miss P——? Or was he unexpectedly absent from Oxford, when it arrived?—The latter supposition was corroborated by the post mark, which I observed was Lincoln. I felt it my duty to open the letter. Alas! it was in a gay strain—unusually gay for N——; informing Agnes that he had been suddenly summoned into Lincolnshire, to his cousin's wedding—where he was very happy—both on account of his relative's happiness, and the anticipation of a similar scene being in store for himself! Every line was buoyant with hope and animation: but the postscript most affected me.

“P. S.—*The tenth of July*, by the way—my Agnes!—*Is* it all over with us, sweet Pythonissa?—Are you and I at this moment on separate fragments of the globe? I shall seal my conquest over you with a kiss when I see you! Remember, you parted from me in a pet, naughty one!—and kissed me rather coldly! But that is the way that your sex always end arguments, when you are vanquished!”

I read these lines in silence;—my wife burst into tears. I hastened to send a second summons to Mr N——, and

directed it to him in Lincoln, where he had requested Miss P—— to address him. Without explaining the precise nature of Miss P——'s seizure, I gave him warning that he must hurry up to town instantly; and that even then, it was doubtful whether he would see her alive. After this little occurrence, I could hardly trust myself to go up-stairs again, and look upon the unfortunate girl. My heart fluttered at the door, and when I entered I burst into tears. I could utter no more than the words, "poor—poor Agnes!"—and withdrew.

I was shocked, and indeed enraged, to find in one of the morning papers, a paragraph stating, though inaccurately, the nature of Miss P——'s illness. Who could have been so unfeeling as to make the poor girl an object of public wonder and pity? I never ascertained, though I made every enquiry, from whom the intelligence was communicated.

One of my patients that day happened to be a niece of the venerable and honoured Dean of —, at whose house she resided. He was in the room when I called; and to explain what he called "the gloom of my manner," I gave him a full account of the melancholy event which had occurred. He listened to me till the tears ran down his face.

"But you have not yet tried the effect of *music*—of which you say she is so fond! Do not you intend to resort to it?" I told him it was our intention; and that our agitation was the only reason why we did not try the effect of it immediately after the galvanism.

"Now, Doctor, excuse an old clergyman, will you?" said the venerable and pious Dean, laying his hand on my arm, "and let me suggest that the experiment may

not be the less successful with the blessing of God, if it be introduced in the course of a religious service. Come, Doctor, what say you?" I paused.

"Have you any objection to my calling at your house this evening, and reading the service appointed by our church for the visitation of the sick? It will not be difficult to introduce the most solemn and affecting strains of music, or to let it precede or follow." Still I hesitated—and yet I scarce knew why. "Come, Doctor, you know I am no enthusiast—I am not generally considered a fanatic. Surely when man has done his best, and fails, he should not hesitate to turn to God!" The good old man's words sunk into my soul, and diffused in it a cheerful and humble hope that the blessing of Providence would attend the means suggested. I acquiesced in the Dean's proposal with delight, and even eagerness; and it was arranged that he should be at my house between seven and eight o'clock that evening. I think I have already observed, that I had an organ, a very fine and powerful one, in my back drawing-room; and this instrument had been the eminent delight of poor Miss P——. She would sit down at it for hours together, and her performance would not have disgraced a professor. I hoped that on the eventful occasion that was approaching, the tones of her favourite instrument, with the blessing of Heaven, might rouse a slumbering responsive chord in her bosom, and aid in dispelling the cruel "charm that deadened her." She certainly could not last long in the condition in which she now lay. Every thing that medicine could do, had been tried—in vain; and if the evening's experiment—our forlorn hope, failed—we must, though with a bleeding heart, submit to the will

of Providence, and resign her to the grave. I looked forward with intense anxiety—with alternate hope and fear—to the engagement of the evening.

On returning home, late in the afternoon, I found poor Mrs P—— had arrived in town, in obedience to my summons; and heart-breaking, I learnt, was her first interview, if such it may be called, with her daughter. Her groans and cries alarmed the whole house, and even arrested the attention of the neighbours. I had left instructions, that in case of her arrival during my absence, she should be shown at once, without any precautions, into the presence of Miss P——; with the hope, faint though it was, that the abruptness of her appearance, and the violence of her grief might operate as a salutary shock upon the stagnant energies of her daughter. “My child! my child! my child!” she exclaimed, rushing up to the bed with frantic haste, and clasping the insensible form of her daughter in her arms, where she held her till she fell fainting into those of my wife. What a dread contrast was there between the frantic gestures—the passionate lamentations of the mother, and the stony silence and motionlessness of the daughter! One little but affecting incident occurred in my presence. Mrs P—— (as yet unacquainted with the peculiar nature of her daughter’s seizure) had snatched Miss P——’s hand to her lips, kissed it repeatedly, and suddenly let it go, to press her own hand upon her head, as if to repress a rising hysterical feeling. Miss P——’s arm, as usual, remained for a moment or two suspended, and only gradually sunk down upon the bed. It looked as if she voluntarily continued it in that position, with a cautioning air. Methinks I see at this moment the affrighted stare with which

Mrs P—— regarded the outstretched arm, her body recoiling from the bed, as though she expected her daughter were about to do or appear something dreadful! I subsequently learned from Mrs P—— that her mother, the grandmother of Agnes, was reported to have been twice affected in a similar manner, though apparently from a different cause; so that there seemed something like a hereditary tendency towards it, even though Mrs P—— herself had never experienced any thing of the kind.

As the memorable evening advanced, the agitation of all who were acquainted with, or interested in the approaching ceremony, increased. Mrs P——, I need hardly say, embraced the proposal with thankful eagerness. About half-past seven, my friend Dr D—— arrived, pursuant to his promise; and he was soon afterwards followed by the organist of the neighbouring church—an old acquaintance, and who was a constant visiter at my house, for the purpose of performing and giving instructions on the organ. I requested him to commence playing Martin Luther's hymn—the favourite one of Agnes—as soon as she should be brought into the room. About eight o'clock, the Dean's carriage drew up. I met him at the door.

“Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it!” he exclaimed, as soon as he entered. I led him up stairs; and, without uttering a word, he took the seat prepared for him, before a table on which lay a Bible and Prayer-Book. After a moment's pause, he directed the sick person to be brought into the room. I stepped up stairs, where I found my wife, with the nurse, had finished dressing Miss P——. I thought her paler than usual,

and that her cheeks seemed hollower than when I had last seen her. There was an air of melancholy sweetness and langour about her, that inspired the beholder with the keenest sympathy. With a sigh, I gathered her slight form into my arms, a shawl was thrown over her, and, followed by my wife and the nurse, who supported Mrs P ——, I carried her down stairs and placed her in an easy recumbent posture, in a large old family chair, which stood between the organ and the Dean's table. How strange and mournful was her appearance! Her luxuriant hair was gathered up beneath a cap, the whiteness of which was equalled by that of her countenance. Her eyes were closed; and this, added to the paleness of her features, her perfect passiveness, and her being enveloped in a long white unruffled morning dress, which appeared not unlike a shroud, at first sight—made her look rather a corpse than a living being! As soon as Dr D—— and I had taken seats on each side of our poor patient, the solemn strains of the organ commenced. I never appreciated music, and especially the sublime hymn of Luther, so much as on that occasion. My eyes were fixed with agonizing scrutiny on Miss P——. Bar after bar of the music melted on the ear, and thrilled upon the heart; but, alas! produced no more effect upon the placid sufferer than the pealing of an abbey organ on the statues around! My heart began to misgive me: if *this* one last experiment failed! When the music ceased, we all kneeled down, and the Dean, in a solemn tone of voice, commenced reading appropriate passages from the service for the visitation of the sick. When he had concluded the 71st Psalm, he approached the chair of Miss P——, dropped upon one knee, held her right hand in his, and in

a somewhat tremulous voice, read the following affecting verses from the 8th chapter of St Luke.

“ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead ; trouble not the Master.

“ But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not ; believe only, and she shall be made whole.

“ And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept and bewailed her : but he said, Weep not ; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

“ And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, *Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.*”

While he was reading the passage which I have marked in italics, my heated fancy almost persuaded me that I saw the eyelids of Miss P—— moving. I trembled from head to foot ; but, alas, it was a delusion.

The Dean, much affected, was proceeding with the fifty-fifth verse, when such a tremendous and long-continued knocking was heard at the street door, as seemed likely to break it open. Every one started up from their knees, as if electrified—all moved but unhappy Agnes—and stood in silent agitation and astonishment. Still the knocking was continued, almost without intermission. My heart suddenly misgave me as to the cause.

“ Go—go—See if ”—— stammered my wife, pale as ashes—endeavouring to prop up the drooping mother of our patient. Before any one had stirred from the spot on which he was standing, the door was burst open, and

in rushed Mr N——, wild in his aspect, frantic in his gesture, and his dress covered with dust from head to foot. We stood gazing at him as though his appearance had petrified us.

"Agnes!—my Agnes!" he exclaimed, as if choked for want of breath.

"AGNES!—Come!" he gasped, while a smile appeared on his face that had a gleam of madness in it.

"Mr N——! what are you about? For mercy's sake, be calm! Let me lead you, for a moment, into another room, and all shall be explained!" said I, approaching and grasping him firmly by the arm.

"AGNES!" he continued, in a tone that made us tremble. He moved towards the chair in which Miss P—— lay. I endeavoured to interpose, but he thrust me aside. The Venerable Dean attempted to dissuade him, but met with no better a reception than myself.

"Agnes!" he reiterated, in a hoarse whisper, "why won't you speak to me? what are they doing to you?" He stepped within a foot of the chair where she lay—calm and immovable as death! We stood by, watching his movements, in terrified apprehension and uncertainty. He dropped his hat, which he had been grasping with convulsive force, and before any one could prevent him, or even suspect what he was about, he snatched Miss P—— out of the chair, and compressed her in his arms with frantic force, while a delirious laugh burst from his lips. We rushed forward to extricate her from his grasp. His arms gradually relaxed—he muttered, "Music! music! a dance!" and almost at the moment that we removed Miss P—— from him, fell senseless into the arms of the organist. Mrs P—— had fainted; my wife

seemed on the verge of hysterics; and the nurse was crying violently. Such a scene of trouble and terror I have seldom witnessed! I hurried with the poor unconscious girl up stairs, laid her upon the bed, shut and bolted the door after me, and hardly expected to find her alive; her pulse, however, was calm, as it had been throughout the seizure. The calm of the Dead Sea seemed upon her!

* * * * *

I feel, however, that I should not protract these painful scenes; and shall therefore hurry to their close. The first letter which I had despatched to Oxford after Mr N——, happened to bear on the outside the words, "*special haste!*" which procured its being forwarded by express after Mr N——. The consternation with which he received and read it may be imagined. He set off for town that instant in a post-chaise and four; but finding their speed insufficient, he took to horseback for the last fifty miles, and rode at a rate which nearly destroyed both horse and rider. Hence his sudden appearance at my house, and the frenzy of his behaviour! After Miss P—— had been carried up stairs, it was thought imprudent for Mr N—— to continue at my house, as he exhibited every symptom of incipient brain fever, and might prove wild and unmanageable. He was, therefore, removed at once to a house within a few doors off, which was let out in furnished lodgings. Dr D—— accompanied him, and bled him immediately, very copiously. I have no doubt that Mr N—— owed his life to that timely measure. He was placed in bed, and put at once under the most vigorous antiphlogistic treatment.

The next evening beheld Dr D——, the Dean of

—, and myself, around the bedside of Agnes. All of us expressed the most gloomy apprehensions. The Dean had been offering up a devout and most affecting prayer.

“Well, my friend,” said he to me, “she is in the hands of God! All that man can do has been done; let us resign ourselves to the will of Providence!”

“Ay, nothing but a miracle can save her, I fear,” replied Dr D—.

“How much longer do you think it probable, humanly speaking, that the system can continue in this state, so as to give hopes of ultimate recovery?” enquired the Dean.

“I cannot say,” I replied, with a sigh. “She *must* sink, and speedily. She has not received, since she was first seized, as much nourishment as would serve for an infant’s meal!”

“I have an impression that she will die suddenly,” said Dr D—; “possibly within the next twelve hours; for I cannot understand how her energies can recover from, or bear longer, this fearful paralysis!”

“Alas, I fear so too!” * * *

“I have heard some frightful instances of premature burial in cases like this,” said the Dean. “I hope you will not think of committing her remains to the earth, before you are satisfied, beyond a doubt, that life is extinct.” I made no reply—my emotions nearly choked me—I could not bear to contemplate such an event.

“Do you know,” said Dr D—, with an apprehensive air, “I have been thinking latterly of the awful possibility, that, notwithstanding the stagnation of her physical powers, her MIND may be sound, and perfectly conscious of all that has transpired about her!”

“ Why—why ”—stammered the Dean, turning pale—
“ what if she has—has heard all that has been said ! ”*

“ Ay ! ” replied Dr D——, unconsciously sinking his voice to a whisper, “ I know of a case—in fact a friend of mine has just published it—in which a woman ”—— There was a faint knocking at the door, and I stepped to it, for the purpose of enquiring what was wanted. While I was in the act of closing it again, I overheard Dr D——’s voice exclaim in an affrighted tone, “ Great God ! ” and on turning round, I saw the Dean moving from the bed, his face white as ashes, and he fell from his chair as if in a fit. How shall I describe what I saw, on approaching the bed.

The moment before, I had left Miss P —— lying in her usual position, and with her eyes closed. They were now wide open, and staring upwards with an expression I have no language to describe. It reminded me of what I had seen when I first discovered her in the fit. Blood, too, was streaming from her nostrils and mouth—in short a more frightful spectacle I never witnessed. In a moment both Dr D—— and I seemed to have lost all power of motion. Here, then, was the spell broken ! The trance over !—I implored Dr. D —— to recollect himself, and conduct the Dean from the room, while I would attend to Miss P —— . The nurse was instantly at my side, but violently agitated. She quickly procured warm water, sponges, cloths, &c., with which she at once wiped away and encouraged the bleeding. The first sound

* In almost every known instance of recovery from catalepsy, the patients have declared that they heard every word that had been uttered beside them !

uttered by Miss P ——— was a long deep-drawn sigh, which seemed to relieve her bosom of an intolerable sense of oppression. Her eyes gradually closed again, and she moved her head away, at the same time raising her trembling right hand to her face. Again she sighed —again opened her eyes, and, to my delight, their expression was more natural than before. She looked languidly about her for a moment, as if examining the bed-curtains—and her eyes closed again. I sent for some weak brandy and water, and gave her a little in a teaspoon. She swallowed it with great difficulty. I ordered some warm water to be got ready for her feet, to equalize the circulation; and while it was preparing, sat by her, watching every motion of her features with the most eager anxiety. “How are you, Agnes?” I whispered. She turned languidly towards me, opened her eyes, and shook her head feebly—but gave me no answer.

“Do you feel pain any where?” I enquired. A faint smile stole about her mouth, but she did not utter a syllable. Sensible that her exhausted condition required repose, I determined not to tax her newly-recovered energies; so I ordered her a gentle composing draught and left her in the care of the nurse, promising to return by and by, to see how my sweet patient went on. I found that the Dean had left. After swallowing a little wine and water, he recovered sufficiently from the shock he had received, to be able, with Dr D ———’s assistance, to step into his carriage, leaving his solemn benediction for Miss P ———.

As it was growing late, I sent my wife to bed, and ordered coffee in my study, whither I retired, and sat

lost in conjecture and reverie till nearly one o'clock. I then repaired to my patient's room ; but my entrance startled her from a sleep that had lasted almost since I had left. As soon as I sat down by her, she opened her eyes—and my heart leaped with joy to see their increasing calmness—their expression resembling what had oft delighted me, while she was in health. After eyeing me steadily for a few moments, she seemed suddenly to recognise me. “ Doctor —— ! ” she whispered, in the faintest possible whisper, while a smile stole over her languid features. I gently grasped her hand ; and in doing so, my tears fell upon her cheek.

“ How strange ! ” she whispered again, in a tone as feeble as before. She gently moved her hand into mine, and I clasped the trembling, lilled fingers, with an emotion I cannot express. She noticed my agitation ; and the tears came into her eyes, while her lip quivered, as though she were going to speak. I implored her, however, not to utter a word, till she was better able to do it without exhaustion ; and lest my presence should tempt her beyond her strength, I bade her good-night—her poor slender fingers once more compressed mine—and I left her to the care of the nurse, with a whispered injunction to step to me instantly if any change took place in Agnes. I could not sleep ! I felt a prodigious burden removed from my mind ; and woke my wife, that she might share in my joy.

I received no summons during the night ; and on entering her room about nine o'clock in the morning, I found that Miss P—— had taken a little arrow-root in the course of the night, and slept calmly, with but few intervals. She had sighed frequently ; and once or twice

conversed for a short time with the nurse about *heaven*—as I understood. She was much stronger than I had expected to find her. I welcomed her affectionately, and she asked me how I was—in a tone that surprised me by its strength and firmness.

“Is the storm over?” she enquired, looking towards the window.

“Oh yes—long, long ago!” I replied seeing at once that she seemed to have no consciousness of the interval that had elapsed.

“And are you all well?—Mrs ——” (my wife), “how is she?”

“You shall see her shortly.”

“Then, no one was hurt?”

“Not a hair of our heads!”

“How frightened I must have been!”

“Poh, poh, Agnes! Nonsense! Forget it!”

“Then—the world is not—there has been no—is all the same as it was?” she murmured, eyeing me apprehensively.

“The world come to an end—do you mean?” She nodded, with a disturbed air—“Oh, no, no! It was merely a thunder-storm.”

“And is it quite over, and gone?”

“Long ago! Do you feel hungry?” I enquired, hoping to direct her thoughts from a topic I saw agitated her.

“Did you ever see such lightning?” she asked, without regarding my question.

“Why—certainly it was very alarming”—

“Yes, it was! Do you know, Doctor,” she con-

tinued, with a mysterious air—"I—I—saw—yes—there were strange faces in the lightning"—

"Come, child, you rave!"

—"They seemed coming towards the world."

Her voice trembled, the colour of her face changed.

"Well—if you *will* talk such nonsense, Agnes, I must leave you. I will go and fetch my wife. Would you like to see her?"

"*Tell N—— to come to me to-day*—I must see HIM. I have a message for him!" She said this with a sudden energy that surprised me, while her eye brightened as it settled on me. Her last words surprised and disturbed me. Were her intellects affected? How did she know—how could she conjecture that he was within reach? I took an opportunity of asking the nurse whether she had mentioned Mr N——'s name to her; but not a syllable had been interchanged upon the subject.

Before setting out on my daily visits, I stepped into her room, to take my leave. I was quitting the room, when happening to look back, I saw her beckoning to me. I returned.

"I MUST see N—— this evening!" said she, with a solemn emphasis that startled me; and as soon as she had uttered the words, she turned her head from me, as if she wished no more to be said.

My first visit was to Mr N——, whom I found in a very weak state, but so much recovered from his illness, as to be sitting up, and partially dressed. He was perfectly calm and collected; and, in answer to his earnest enquiries, I gave him a full account of the nature of Miss P——'s illness. He received the intelligence of the

favourable change that had occurred, with evident though silent ecstasy. After much inward doubt and hesitation, I thought I might venture to tell him of the parting—the twice-repeated request she had made. The intelligence blanched his already pallid cheeks to a whiter hue, and he trembled violently.

“Did you tell her I was in town? Did she recollect me?”

“No one has breathed your name to her!” I replied. * * * *

“Well, Doctor—if, on the whole, you think so—that it would be safe,” said N —, after we had talked much on the matter—“I will step over and see her; but—it looks very—very strange!”

“Whatever whim may actuate her, I think it better, on the whole, to gratify her. Your refusal *may* be attended with infinitely worse effects than an interview. However, you shall hear from me again. I will see if she continues in the same mind; and, if so, I will step over and tell you.” I took my leave.

A few moments before stepping down to dinner, I sat beside Miss P —, making my usual enquiries; and was gratified to find that her progress, though slow, seemed sure. I was leaving, when, with similar emphasis to that she had previously displayed, she again said—

“Remember! N — must be here to-night!”

I was confounded. What could be the meaning of this mysterious pertinacity? I felt distracted with doubt, and dissatisfied with myself for what I had told to N —. I felt answerable for whatever ill effects might ensue; and yet what could I do!

It was evening,—a mild, though lustrous July evening. The skies were all blue and white, save where the retiring sun-light produced a mellow mixture of colours towards the west. Not a breath of air disturbed the serene complacency. My wife and I sat on each side of the bed where lay our lovely invalid, looking, despite her illness, beautiful, and in comparative health. Her hair was parted with negligent simplicity over her pale forehead. Her eyes were brilliant, and her cheeks occasionally flushed. She spoke scarce a word to us as we sat beside her. I gazed at her with doubt and apprehension. I was aware that health could not possibly produce the colour and vivacity of her complexion and eyes; and felt at a loss to what I should refer it.

“Agnes, love!—How beautiful is the setting sun!” exclaimed my wife, drawing aside the curtains.

“Raise me! Let me look at it!” replied Miss P—— faintly. She gazed earnestly at the magnificent object for some minutes; and then abruptly said to me—

“He will be here soon?”

“In a few moments I expect him. But—Agnes—Why do you wish to see him?”

She sighed, and shook her head.

It had been arranged that Dr D—— should accompany Mr N—— to my house, and conduct him up stairs, after strongly enjoining on him the necessity there was for controlling his feelings, and displaying as little emotion as possible. My heart leaped into my mouth—as the saying is—when I heard the expected knock at the door.

“N—— is come at last!” said I, in a gentle tone, looking earnestly at her, to see if she was agitated. It was not the case. She sighed, but evinced no trepidation.

"Shall he be shown in at once?" I enquired.

"No—wait a few moments," replied the extraordinary girl, and seemed lost in thought for about a minute. "Now!" she exclaimed; and I sent down the nurse, herself pale and trembling with apprehension, to request the attendance of Dr D—— and Mr N——.

As they were heard slowly approaching the room, I looked anxiously at my patient, and kept my fingers at her pulse. There was not a symptom of flutter or agitation. At length the door was opened, and Dr D—— slowly entered, with N—— upon his arm. As soon as his pale trembling figure was visible, a calm and heavenly smile beamed upon the countenance of Miss P——. It was full of ineffable loveliness! She stretched out her right arm: he pressed it to his lips, without uttering a word.

My eyes were riveted on the features of Miss P——. Either they deceived me, or I saw a strange alteration—as if a cloud were stealing over her face. I was right!—We all observed her colour fading rapidly. I rose from my chair; Dr D—— also came nearer, thinking she was on the verge of fainting. Her eye was fixed upon the flushed features of her lover, and gleamed with radiance. She gently elevated both her arms towards him, and he leaned over her.

"PREPARE!" she exclaimed, in a low thrilling tone;—her features became paler and paler—her arms fell. She had spoken—she had breathed her last. She was dead!

Within twelve months poor N—— followed her; and, to the period of his death, no other word or thought seemed to occupy his mind but the momentous warning

which had issued from the lips of Agnes P——, PREPARE !

I have no mystery to solve, no donouement to make. I tell the facts as they occurred ; and hope they may not be told in vain !

CHAPTER II.

THE MAGDALEN.

DESPISED daughter of frailty! Outcast of outcasts! Poor wayward lamb, torn by the foulest wolf of the forest! My tears shall fall on your memory, as often they did over the wretched recital of sin and shame which I listened to on your deserted deathbed! Oh that they could have fallen on you early enough to wash away the first stain of guilt; that they could have trickled down upon your heart in time to soften it once more into virtue!

Ill-fated victim, towards whom the softest heart of tenderness that throbs in your sex, beats, not with sympathy, but scorn and anger! *My* heart hath yearned towards thee, when none else knew of thee, or cared for thy fate! Yes—and above all, (devoutly be the hope expressed!) the voice of Heaven whispered in thine aching ear peace and forgiveness; so that death was but as the dark seal of thy pardon registered in the courts of Eternal Mercy!

Many as are the scenes of guilt and misery sketched in this Diary, I know not that I have approached any

with feelings of deeper grief than that which it is my painful lot now to lay before the public. Reader, if your tears start, if your heart ache as you go on with the gloomy narrative—pause, that those tears may swell into a stream, that that heart may wellnigh break, to think how common, how every day is the story!

Look round you, upon the garden of humanity; see where the lilies, lovely and white as snow in their virgin purity, are blooming—see—see how many of them suddenly fade, wither, fall! Go nearer—and behold an adder lying coiled around their stems! Think of this—and then be yourself—young man, or old—**THAT ADDER** if you can!

About nine o'clock on a miserable Sunday evening in October, 18—, we were sitting quietly at home around our brisk fire, listening, in occasional intervals of silence, to the rain which, as it had during the whole of the day, still came down heavily, accompanied with the dreary whistling of the wind. The gloom without served but to enhance by contrast the cheerfulness—the sense of snugness within. I was watching my good wife discharge her regular Sunday evening duty of catechising the children, and pleasing myself with the promptitude and accuracy of my youngest child's replies, when the servant brought me up word that I was wanted below. I went down stairs immediately. In the hall, just beneath the lamp, sat the ungainly figure of a short, fat, bloated old Jewess.

“This here lady wishes to see you, sir,” said she, rising with a confident, and I fancied somewhat tipsy, tone and air, and handing to me a small dirty slip of

paper, on which was written, "Miss Edwards, No. 11, ——— Court, ——— Street (3d Floor)." The handwriting of the paper, hasty as was the glance I gave at it, struck me. It was small and elegant, but evidently the production of a weak or unsteady hand.

"Pray what is the matter with this lady?" I enquired.

"Matter, sir? Matter enough, I warrant me! The young woman's not long to live, as I reckon. She's worn out—that's all!" she replied, with a freedom amounting to rudeness, which at once gave me an inkling of her real character. "Do you think it absolutely necessary for me to call on her to-night?" I enquired, not much liking the sort of place I was likely to be led to.

"*She* does, I fancy, poor thing—and she *really* looks very ill?"

"Is it any sudden illness?"

"No, sir—it's been coming on this long time—ever since she came to live with me. My daughter and I thinks 'tis a decline."

"Couldn't you take her to a dispensary?"—said I, doubtingly.

"Marry—you'll be *paid* for your visit, I suppose. Isn't that enough?" said the woman, with an impudent air.

"Well, well—I'll follow you in a minute or two," said I, opening the street door, for there was something in the woman's appearance that I hated to have in my house.

"I say, sir!" she called out in an under-tone, as I was somewhat unceremoniously shutting the door upon her,—“You mustn't be put out of your way, mind, if any of my girls should be about. They're noisy devils, to

be sure—but they won't meddle" —— The closing of the door prevented my hearing the conclusion of the sentence. I stood for a few moments irresolute. My duty, however, so far seemed clear—and all minor considerations, I thought, should give way ; so I equipped myself quickly, and set out on my walk, which was as unpleasant as wind, rain, and darkness could make it.

I do not see why I should mince matters by hesitating to state that the house in which I found myself, after about ten minutes' walk, was one of ill fame—and that, too, apparently, of the lowest and vilest description. The street which led to —— Court, was narrow, ill lighted, and noisy—swarming with persons and places of infamous character. I was almost alarmed for my personal safety as I passed them ; and, on entering the court, trembled for a valuable repeater I had about me. At that moment, too, I happened to recollect having read, some time before, in a police report, an account of a method of entrapping unwary persons, very similar in circumstances to those in which I found myself at that moment. A medical man was suddenly summoned to see—he was told—a dying patient ; but on reaching the residence of the supposed invalid, he was set upon unexpectedly by thieves, robbed of every thing he had about him, and turned into the street severely, if not dangerously beaten. A pleasant reminiscence ! Concealing, however, my watch as well as I could, and buttoning my great-coat up to the chin, I resolved to persevere, trusting to the protection of Providence. The life of a fellow-creature might really be at stake ; and, besides, I was no stranger to scenes of misery and destitution among the lowest orders.

— Court was a nest of hornets. The dull light of a single lamp in the middle of it showed me the slatternly half-dressed figures of young women, clustering about the open doors of every house in the court, and laughing loudly as they occasionally shouted their vile ribaldries to one another across the court. All this was sickening and ill-omened enough; but I resolved not even yet to give up. No. 11, I found, was the last house in the court; and just as I was going to enquire of a filthy creature squatting on the door-steps, she called out to some one within, "Mother! Mother! Here's the Doctor come to see Sall!"

Her "mother," the wretch who had called upon me, presently waddled unsteadily to the door, with a candle in her hand. She seemed to have been disturbed at drinking; and, a little to my alarm, I heard the gruff voice of a man in the room she had just quitted.

"Please to follow me, sir! This way, sir. The young woman is up stairs. Bett!" she called out, suddenly stopping, and turning round, "Come and take this here gentleman's wet umbrella, and dry it by the fire!"

"Thank you—thank you—I'll not trouble you! I'll carry it with me; 'tis not *very* wet," I replied hastily, as I held it—but dripping at every step. I did not choose, believe me! to part with what I might never see again. It might too—though God prevent the occasion!—be a small matter of defence to me, if my fears about the nature of my errand should be verified. The moment, however, that the bedroom door was opened, other emotions than that of apprehension occupied my mind. The apartment was little, if at all, superior to that which I have described in a former paper, as the residence of the

Irish family, the "O'Hurdles;"* but it was much smaller, and infinitely filthier. A candle, that seemed never to have been snuffed, stood on the chimney-piece, beside one or two filthy cups and jugs, shedding a dull dismal sort of twilight over an old rush-bottomed chair or two, a small rickety chest of drawers, an old hair trunk with the lid broken in, a small circular table, on which was a phial and a tea-cup; and, along the farther extremity of the room, a wretched pallet, all tossed and disordered. A scanty fire was burning in a very small grate, and the inclemency of the weather seemed completely excluded by a little window, two-thirds of whose panes were, however, stuffed with rags, paper, &c. I felt disposed, immediately on entering, to remove one of them, for there was a horrid closeness in the room.

"Well, there she is in the bed, poor devil, ill enough, I'll answer for't," said the old woman, panting with the effort of ascending the stairs. Reaching down the candle from the chimney-piece, she snuffed it with her fingers, and set it upon the table; and then, after stirring up the fire, she took up the candle she had brought, and withdrew, saying, as she went out, "Miss Edwards said she'd rather see you alone, so I'm off, you know. If you want any thing, I dare say you can call out for it; some of the girls will be sure to hear you."

I was happy to be relieved of her presence! When the door had closed upon her, I drew one of the chairs to the bedside, together with the table and candle, and beheld the figure of a female lying on her back amidst the disordered clothes, her black hair stretched dishe-

* "Rich and Poor." Vol ii. page 201.

velled over the dirty pillow, and her face completely concealed beneath both hands.

"Well, madam, are you in much pain?" I enquired, gently trying, at the same time, to disengage her right hand, that I might both feel her pulse and see her countenance. I did not succeed, however, for her hands were clasped over her face with some little force; and, as I made the effort I have mentioned, a faint sob burst from her.

"Come, come, madam," I continued, in as gentle a tone as I could, renewing the effort to dislodge her hand, "I'm afraid you are in much pain! Don't, however, prevent my doing what little may be in my power to relieve you!" Still her hands moved not. "I am Dr —; you yourself sent for me! What is ailing you? You need not hide your face from me in this strange way!—Come"——

"There, then!—*Do you know me?*" she exclaimed, in a faint shriek, at the same time starting up suddenly in bed, and removing her hands from her face, which—her hair pressed away on each side by her hands—was turned towards me with an anguished, affrighted stare, her features white and wasted. The suddenness and singularity of the action sufficiently startled me. She continued in the same attitude and expression of countenance (the latter most vividly recalling to my mind that of Mrs Siddons, celebrated in pictures, in the most agitating crisis of her *Lady Macbeth*), breathing in short quick gasps, and with her eyes fixed wildly upon me. If the look did not petrify me, as the fabled head of Medusa, it shocked, or rather horrified me beyond all expression, as I gazed at it; for—could my eyes see

aright?—I gradually *recognised* the face as one known to me. The cold thrill that passed through me—the sickening sensations I then experienced, creep over me now that I am writing.

“Why—am I right?—ELEANOR!” I exclaimed faintly, my hands elevated with consternation, at the same time almost doubting the evidence of my senses. She made me no reply, but shook her head with frantic violence for a few moments, and then sunk exhausted on her pillow. I would have spoken to her—I would have touched her; but the shock of what I had just seen, had momentarily unnerved me. I did not recover my self-possession till I found that she had fainted. Oh, mercy, mercy! what a wreck of beauty was I gazing on! Could it be possible? Was this pallid, worn-out, death-struck creature, lying in such a den of guilt and pollution; was this the gay and beautiful girl I had once known as the star of the place where she resided—whom my wife knew—whom, in short, we had both known, and that familiarly? The truth flashed in a moment over my shuddering, reluctant soul. I must be gazing on the spoil of the seducer! I looked with horror, not to say loathing, on her lifeless features, till I began to doubt whether, after all, they could really be those I took them to be. But her extraordinary conduct—there could be no mistake when I thought of that.

With the aid of a vinaigrette, which I always carried about with me, and dashing a little cold water in her face, she gradually revived. The moment her slowly opening eyes fell upon me, she closed them again, turned aside her head with a convulsive start, and covered her face, as before, with her hands.

"Come, come, Miss B——,"—a stifled groan burst from her lips on hearing me mention her real name, and she shook her head with agony unutterable, "you *must* be calm, or I can do nothing for you. There's nothing to alarm you, surely, in me! I am come at your own request, and wish to be of service to you. Tell me at once, now, where do you feel pain?"

"HERE!" replied the wretched girl, placing her left hand with convulsive energy upon her heart. Oh, the tone of her voice! I would to Heaven—I would to Heaven, that the blackest seducer on earth could have been present to hear her utter that *one word*!

"Have you any pain in the other side?" I enquired, looking away from her to conceal my emotion, and trying to count her pulses. She nodded with an anguished air in the affirmative.

"Do you spit much during the day? Any blood, Miss B——?"

"Miss B——!" she echoed, with a smile of mingled despair and grief; "call me rather *Devil*! Don't mock me with kind words! Don't, Doctor! No, not a word—a single word—a word," she continued with increasing wildness of tone and air. "See—I'm prepared! I'm beforehand! I expected something like this!—Don't—don't dare me! Look!" She suddenly thrust her right hand under the bed-clothes, and, to my horror, drew from under them a table-knife, which she shook before me with the air of a maniac. I wrenched it out of her hand with little difficulty.

"Well, then—so—so"—she gasped, clutching at her throat with both hands. I rose up from my chair, telling her in a stern tone, that if she persisted in such

wild antics, I should leave her at once ; that my time was valuable, and the hour besides growing late.

"Go—go then ! Desert one whom the world has already deserted !—Yes, go—go away—I deserve no better—and yet—from what I *once* knew of you—I did not expect it !" exclaimed the miserable girl, bursting into a flood of bitter, but relieving tears. Finding that what I had said had produced its desired effect, I resumed my seat. There was a silence of several moments.

"I—I suppose you are shocked—to—to see me here—but you've heard it all"—said she faintly.

"Oh—we'll talk about that by and by ; I must first see about your health. I am afraid you are *very* ill ! haven't you been long so ?—Why did not you send for me earlier ?—Rely upon it, you need not have sent twice !"

"Oh—can you ask me, Doctor ?—I dared not !—I wish—oh how I wish I had not sent for you *now* ! The sight of you has driven me nearly mad ! You must see that it has—but you did not mean it ! Oh !—oh !—oh !" she groaned, apparently half choked—"what I feel *HERE* !" pressing both her hands upon her heart, "what a *hell* !" quivering forth the last word with an intonation that was fearful.

"Once more—I entreat of you to check your feelings, otherwise, it is absurd for me to be here ! What good can I possibly do you, if you rave in this manner ?" said I, speaking sternly. She made no reply, but suddenly coughed violently ; then started up in the bed, felt about in haste for her handkerchief, raised it to her lips, and drew it away marked with blood.

She had burst a blood-vessel !

I was dreadfully alarmed for her. The incessant use she made of her handkerchief soon rendered it useless. It was steeped in blood. She pointed hurriedly to the drawers—I understood her—drew one of them open, and instantly brought her another handkerchief. That, also, was soon useless. In the intervals of this horrid work she attempted to speak to me—but I stopped her once for all, by laying my finger on my lips, and then addressing her solemnly—"In the name of God, I charge you to be silent! A word—a single word—and you are a dead woman! Your life is in the utmost danger"—again she seemed attempting to speak—"if you utter a syllable, I tell you, it will destroy you; you know the consequences—you will therefore die a *suicide*—and, think of *HEREAFTER*!"

A smile—one I cannot attempt to characterise, but by saying it seemed an unearthly one—fitted for an instant over her features—and she did not seem disposed again to disobey my injunctions. I proceeded to bleed * her immediately, having obtained what was necessary—with great difficulty—without summoning any one for the present into the room. When she saw what I was about, she whispered faintly with a calm but surprised air—pointing to her steeped handkerchiefs—"What! more *blood*!"—I simply implored her to be silent, and trust herself in my hands. I bled her till she fainted.

* I have often heard people express astonishment at the bleeding a patient who has already bled profusely from a ruptured vessel. It is with a view to lessening the heart's action, so as to diminish the volume of blood that it propels through the injured vessel, which may so have an opportunity of healing before it is called upon to perform its full functions.

A few moments before she became insensible—while the deathlike hue and expression of fainting were stealing over her features, she exclaimed, though almost inaudibly —“Am I dying?”

When I had taken the requisite quantity of blood, I bound up the arm as well as I could, took out my pencil, hastily wrote a prescription on a slip of paper, and called for such assistance as might be within reach. A young woman of odious appearance answered my summons by bursting noisily into the room.

“La!” she exclaimed, on catching a glimpse of the blood, and the pallid face of my patient—“La! Sure Sall’s *booked!*”

“Hush, woman!” said I sternly, “take this”—giving her the prescription—“to the nearest druggist’s shop, and get it made up immediately; and in the mean-time send some elderly person here.”

“Oh—her mother, eh?”

“Her *mother!*” I echoed with astonishment. She laughed, “La, now—you don’t know the ways of these places. We all calls her mother!”

Pity for the miserable victim I had in charge, joined with disgust and horror at the persons about me and the place in which I was, kept me silent—till the woman last alluded to, made her appearance with the medicine I had ordered, and which I instantly poured into a cup and gave my patient. “Is the young woman much worse, sir?” she enquired, in an under tone, and with something like concern of manner.

“Yes”—I replied, laconically, “she must be taken care of, and that well—or she will not live the night out”—I whispered.

"Better take her to the hospital, at once—hadn't we?" she enquired, approaching the bed, and eyeing Miss Edwards with stupid, unfeeling curiosity.

"She is not to be moved out of her bed, at the peril of her life—not for many days. Mind, woman—I tell you that distinctly."

"You tell me that distinctly? And what the devil if you do? What, a God's name, is to be done with a sick young woman, *here*? We've something else to do beside making our house into an hospital!"

I could with difficulty repress my indignation.

"Pray, for pity's sake, my good woman, don't speak so cruelly about this unfortunate girl! Consider how soon you may be lying on your own deathbed"—

"Deathbed, be ——! Who's to pay for her keep if she stops here? *I* can't, and what's more, *I* won't—and *I* defy the parish to make me! She can't a'rn her living *now*, that's plain! But, by the way," she continued, suddenly addressing my patient, "Sally, you had money enough a few days ago, *I* know; where is it now?"

"My good woman," said I, gently removing her from the bedside, "do but leave the room for a moment. *I* will come down stairs and arrange every thing with you."

"Leave the room! Ah, ha!—that you may bag the blunt—if there is any!" She seemed inclined to be obstreperous. "I tell you you are *killing* this poor girl!" said I, my eye kindling upon the old monster, with anger. Muttering some unintelligible words of ill-temper, she suffered me to close the door upon her, and I once more took my seat at the bedside. Miss Edwards' face evidenced the agitation with which she

had listened to the cruel and insolent language of the beldam in whose power she for the present lay; I trembled for the effect of it.

"Now, I entreat you, suffer me to have all the talking to myself for a moment or two. You can answer all my questions with a nod, or so. Do you think that if I were to send to you a nice respectable woman—a nurse from a dispensary with which I am connected—to attend upon you, the people of the house would let you remain quiet for a few days—till you could be removed? Nod, if you think so!" She looked at me with surprise while I talked about removing her, but she simply nodded in acquiescence.

"If you are well enough by and by, would you object to being taken from this place to a dispensary, where I would see to your comfort?" She shook her head.

"Are you indebted to any one here?"

"No, my guilt has paid"—she whispered. I pressed my finger on my lips, and she ceased. "Well, we understand one another for the present. I must not stay much longer, and you must not be exhausted. I shall charge the people below to keep you quiet, and a kind experienced nurse shall be at your bedside within two hours from this time. I will leave orders, till she comes, with the woman of the house to give you your medicine, and to keep you quiet, and the room cool. Now I charge you, by all your hopes of life—by all your fears of death—let nothing prevail on you to open your lips, unless it be absolutely necessary. Good evening—may God protect you!" I was rising, when she beckoned me into my seat again. She groped with her hand under her pillow for a moment, and brought out a purse.

"Poh, poh ! put it away—at least for the present !" said I.

"Your fee *must* be paid !" she whispered.

"I visit you as a dispensary patient, and shall assuredly receive no fee. You cannot move me, any more than you can shake St Paul's," said I, in a peremptory tone. Dropping her purse, she seized my hand in both hers, and looking up at me with a woful expression, her tears fell upon it. After a pause, she whispered, "Only a single word !—Mrs ——," naming my wife, "you will not tell her of me ?" she enquired, with an imploring look. "No, I will not !" I replied, though I knew I should break my word the moment I got home. She squeezed my hand, and sighed heavily. I did not regret to see her beginning to grow drowsy with exhaustion, and perhaps the effect of the medicine I had given her, so I slipped quietly out of the room. Having no candle, I was obliged to grope my way down stairs in the dark. I was shocked and alarmed to hear, as I descended, by the angry voices both of men and women, that there was a disturbance down stairs. Oh, what a place for such a patient as I had quitted ! I paused, when half way down, to listen. "I tell you, I *didn't* take the watch," cried the infuriate voice of a female. "I'll be ——, I did."

"I saw you with it—I saw you with it !" replied a man's voice.

"You're a liar ! A —— liar !" There was the sound of a scuffle.

"Come, come, my girl ! Easy there ! Easy !—Be quiet, or I'll take you *all* off to the watch-house !—Come, Bett, you'd better come off peaceably at once !

This here gentleman says as how you've stolen his watch, and so you *must* go, of course!"—"I won't! I won't! I'll tear your eyes out! I'll see you all —— first! I will," yelled the voice I had first heard, and the uproar increased. Gracious Heaven! in what a place was I! was my wretched patient! I stood on the dark stairs, leaning on my umbrella, not knowing which way to go, or what to do. I resolved at length to go down; and on reaching the scene of all this uproar, found the passage and doorway choked with a crowd of men and women.

"What is the meaning of all this uproar?" I exclaimed, in as authoritative a manner as I knew how to assume. "For God's sake be quiet! Do you know that there is a young woman dying up stairs?"

"Dying! And what's that to me? They say I'm a thief—He says I've got his watch—he does, the —— liar!" shouted a young woman, her dress almost torn off her shoulders, and her hair hanging loosely all about her head and neck, and almost covering her face. She tried to disengage herself from the grasp of a watchman, and struggled to reach a young man, who, with impassioned gestures, was telling the crowd that he had been robbed of his watch in the house. My soul was sick within me. I would fain have slipped away, once for all, from such a horrid scene and neighbourhood, but the thoughts of her. I had left above detained me.

"I wish to speak to you for a moment," said I, addressing the old proprietress of the house. "Speak to me, indeed!" she replied, scarce vouchsafing me a look, and panting with rage. "Here's this —— liar says he's been robbed here; that one o' my girls is a thief! He's trying to blast the character of my house"—and she

poured such a volley of foul obscene names upon the object of her fury, as I had scarcely thought it possible for the tongue of man, much less of woman, to utter.

"But, *do* let me have *one* word with you," I whispered, imploringly—"the poor girl up stairs—her life is at stake"——

"Here, Moll, do you come and speak to the Doctor! I've something else on my hands, I warrant me!" and turning abruptly from me, she plunged again into the quarrel which I had interrupted.

The young woman she addressed made her way out of the crowd—led me into a small filthy room at the back of the house, and civilly, but with some agitation, arising from her having taken a part in the dispute, asked me what I wanted. "Why, only to tell you that Miss Edwards is my patient—that I know her."

"Lord, sir, for the matter of that, so do a hundred others"——

"Silence, woman!" said I, indignantly, "and listen to what I am saying. I tell you, Miss Edwards is my patient; that she is in dying circumstances; and I hold you all responsible for her safety. If she dies through being disturbed, or frightened in any way, recollect you will be placed in very serious circumstances, and I will litness against you!"

"I'm very sorry for the poor thing, sir—very!" she plied, as if startled by what I had said; "she's the quietest, civilest, best-behaved of any of our ladies, by r! What can we do, sir?"

"Keep the house quiet; do not let her be spoken to and in an hour's time I shall send a proper woman to sit upon her."

“ Lord, sir, but how’s the poor creature to pay you and the woman, too ? She’s been laid up, I don’t know how long—indeed almost ever since she’s been here ! ”

“ That *I* will see about. All I want from you is to attend to what I have told you. I shall call here early to-morrow morning, and hope to find that my wishes have been attended to. It will be a very serious business for you all, mind me, if they have not. If I do not find this hubbub cease instantly, I shall at my own expense engage a constable to keep the peace here. Tell this to the people without there. I know the magistrates at — Street Office, and will certainly do what I say.” She promised that all I had said should be attended to as far as possible ; and I hurried from such a scene as it has not often been my lot to witness. I thanked God heartily, on quitting the house and neighbourhood, that I found myself once more in the open air, cold, dark, and rainy though it was. I breathed freely for the first time since entering within the atmosphere of such horrible contamination. A rush of recollections of Miss B——, once virtuous, happy, beautiful ; now guilty, polluted, dying—of former and present times—overwhelmed my mind. What scenes must this poor fallen creature have passed through ! How was it that, long ere this, she had not laid violent hands upon herself,—that in her paroxysms of remorse and despair, she had not rushed from an existence that was hateful,—hurried madly from the scene of guilt, into that of its punishment ! I at once longed for and loathed a possible rehearsal of all. Full of such reflections as these, I found myself at the door of the dispensary. The hour was rather late, and it was not without difficulty that I could find such a

person as I had undertaken to send. I prescribed the requisite remedies, and gave them to the nurse with all fitting directions, and despatched her to the scene of her attendance, as quickly as possible—promising to be with her as early as I could in the morning, and directing her to send for me without hesitation at any hour of the night, if she thought her patient exhibited any alarming symptoms. It was past eleven when I reached home. I told the reader a little while ago, that I knew I should break my promise—that I could not help informing my wife of what had happened. I need hardly say the shock gave her a sleepless night. I think the present the fittest opportunity for mentioning shortly to the reader, the circumstances under which we became first acquainted with the *soi-disant* Miss Edwards.

Several years before the period of which I have been writing, my wife's health required the assistance of change of scene and fresh country air. I therefore took her down, in the spring of the year, to what was then considered one of the fashionable watering-places, and engaged lodgings for her at the boarding-house of a respectable widow lady, a little way out of the town. Her husband had been a captain in the East India service, who spent his money faster than he earned it; so that, on his death, nothing but the most active exertions of numerous friends and relatives preserved his widow and daughter from little less than absolute destitution. They took for Mrs B—— the house she occupied when we became her lodgers, furnished it with comfort, and even elegance; and, in a word, fairly set her a-going as the proprietress of a boarding-house. The respectability of her character, and the comforts of her little establishment, procured for

her permanent patronage. How well do I recollect her prepossessing appearance as it first struck me! There was an air of pensive cheerfulness and composure about her features, that spoke eloquently in her favour; and I felt gratified at the thought of committing my wife and family into such good hands. As we were coming down stairs after inspecting the house, through the half-open door of a back parlour, I caught a glimpse of an uncommonly handsome and elegantly dressed girl, sitting at a desk writing.

"Only my daughter, sir," said Mrs B——, observing my eye rather inquisitively peering after her.

"Dear!—How like she is to the pictures of the Madonna!" exclaimed my wife.

"Yes, madam. It is often remarked here," replied Mrs B——, colouring with pleasure; "and what's far better, ma'am, she's the best girl you'll meet with in a day's walk through a town! She's all I care for in the world!" she added with a sigh. We congratulated ourselves mutually; expressing anticipations of pleasure from our future intercourse. After seeing my family settled in their new quarters, I left for London—my professional engagements not allowing me more than a day's absence. Every letter I received from my wife contained commendations of her hostess, and "the Madonna," her beautiful, accomplished, and agreeable daughter, with whom she had got particularly intimate, and was seldom out of her company. The visits "like angels', few and far between," that I was able to pay to ——, made Miss B—— as great a favourite with me as with my wife—as, indeed, was the case with all that knew or saw her. I found that she was well known about the place by the

name of "the Madonna;" and was so much pestered with the usual impertinences of dandies, as to be unable to go about so much as she could have otherwise wished. The frank, simple-hearted creature was not long in making a confidant of my wife; who, in their various conversations, heard with but little surprise, of frequent anonymous billet-doux, copies of verses, &c. &c., and flattering attentions paid by the most distinguished strangers; and, in one instance, even by Royalty itself. She had refused several advantageous offers of marriage, pressed upon her to a degree that was harassing, on the part of her mother, to whom she was passionately attached, and from whom she could not bear the thought of the most partial separation. Her education—her associations—her cast of character—her tastes and inclinations, were considerably beyond her present sphere. "I once should have laughed, indeed, at any one talking of my becoming the daughter of a lodging-house keeper," said the proud girl, on one occasion to my wife, her swan-like neck, curving with involuntary hauteur, which, however, was soon softened by my wife's calm and steady eye of reproof, as she assured her—"Eleanor, I thought it no harm to be such a daughter." This pride appeared to my wife, though not to me, some security against the peculiar dangers that beset Miss B——.

"She's too proud—too high-spirited a girl," she would say, "to permit herself to tamper with temptation. She's infinitely above listening to nonsense. Trust me, there's that in her would frighten off fifty triflers a-day!"

"My view of the matter, Emily, is far different," I would say. "Pride, unless combined with the highest qualities, is apt to precipitate such a girl into the vortex

that humility could never have come within sight or reach of. Pride dares the danger that lowliness trembles at and avoids. Pride must press forward to the verge of the precipice, to show the ease and grace of its defiance. My Emily ! merely human confidence is bad—is dangerous—in proportion to its degree. Consider—remember what you have both heard and read of the disastrous consequences attendant on the pride of a disappointed girl !”

The predominant taste of Miss B—— was novel-reading, which engaged her attention every spare hour she could snatch from other engagements. Hence what could she imbibe but, too often, false sentiment—what gather but the most erroneous and distorted views of life and morals ? Add to this the consciousness of her own beauty, and the involuntary tribute it exacted from all who saw her—the intoxicating, maddening fumes of flattery—ah, me ! I should have trembled for her indeed, had she been a daughter of mine ! The doting mother, however, seemed to see none of these dangers—to feel none of these apprehensions ; and cruel, surely, and impertinent, would it have been in us to suggest them. For nearly three months was my wife a guest of Mrs B——’s, and a familiar—I might almost say an affectionate companion of her beautiful daughter. On leaving, my wife pressed Miss B—— (the mother was, of course, out of the question) to pay her a speedy visit in town, and exacted a promise of occasional correspondence. Long after our return to London was “the Madonna” a subject of conversation, and many were the anxious wishes and hopes expressed by my wife on her behalf. Miss B—— did not avail herself of the invita-

tion above mentioned, farther than by a hasty passing call at our house during the absence of both of us. One circumstance and another—especially the increasing cares of a family—brought about a slackening, and at length a cessation, of the correspondence betwixt my wife and her friend “the Madonna,” though we occasionally heard of her by friends recently returned from ——. I do not think, however, her name was once mentioned for about three years before the period at which this narrative commences.

Now, I suppose the reader can form some idea of the consternation with which I recognised in “Sally Edwards” the “Madonna” of a former day! The very watch-pockets at the back of our bed were the pretty presents of her whose horrid story I was telling my sobbing wife! I could have torn them from the bed-head, for the sake of their torturing associations! They would not let us sleep in peace. I was startled, during the night, from a doze rather than from sleep, by the sobs of my wife.

“What’s the matter, Emily?” I asked.

“Oh!” she replied; “*what* has become of poor Mrs B——! Rely on it, she’s dead of a broken heart!”

For two hours before my usual hour of rising, I lay awake, casting about in my mind by what strange and fatal course of events Miss B—— had been brought into the revolting, the awful circumstances in which I found her. Dreadfully distinct as was the last night’s interview in my recollection, I was not wholly free from transient fits of incredulity. I *could* not identify the two—Eleanor B—— with *Sall Edwards*!—All such notions, however, were dissipated by nine o’clock, when

I found myself once more by the bedside of "Miss Edwards." She was asleep when I entered; and I motioned the nurse to silence, as I stepped noiselessly towards the chair she quitted to make room for me. Oh, God! how my heart ached on that occasion! Was the pitiable object before me Eleanor B——? Were they *her* fair limbs that now lay beneath the filthy bed-clothes? Was the ashy face—the hollow cheek—the sunken eye—the matted disordered hair—did all these belong to Eleanor B——, the beautiful Madonna of a former and happier day! Alas for the black hair, braided so tastefully over the proud brow of alabaster, now clammy with the dews of disease and death, seen from amid the dishevelled hair like a neglected grave-stone, pressed down into the ground, and half overgrown with the dank grass of the churchyard! Alas for the radiant eye! Wo is me!—where is the innocent heart of past years? Oh, seraph! fallen from Heaven into the pit of darkness and horror—how camest thou here!

Faint—vain attempt to embody in words some of the agitating thoughts that passed through my mind during the quarter of an hour that I sate beside my sleeping patient! Tears I did not—could not shed. My grief formed no other outlet than a half-smothered sigh—that ransacked, however, every corner of my heart. Every thing about me wore the air of desolation and misery. The nurse, wearied with her night's watch, sate near me on the foot of the bed, drooping with drowsiness. The room was small, dirty, and almost destitute of furniture. The rain, seen indistinctly through the few dirty panes of glass, was pouring down as it had been all night. The wind continued to sigh drearily. Then, the house where

I was—the receptacle of the vilest of the vile—the very antechamber of hell! When shall I forget that morning—that quarter of an hour's silence and reflection!

And thou, FIEND! the doer of all this—would that THOU hadst been there to see it!

A sudden noise made by the nurse woke Miss Edwards. Without moving from the posture in which she lay—on her side, with her face away from me—as she had slept, I found, nearly all the night—she opened her eyes, and after looking steadfastly at the wall for a few moments, closed them again. I gently took hold of her hand, and then felt her pulse. She turned her head slowly towards me; and after fixing her eyes on me for an instant with an air of apathy, they widened into a strange stare of alarm, while her white face seemed blanched to even a whiter hue than before. Her lips slowly parted—together, I protest my blood chilled beneath what I looked upon. There was no smile of welcome—no appearance of recognition—but she seemed as if she had been woke from dreaming of a frightful spectre, that remained visible to her waking eyes.

“Miss B——, Miss Edwards, I mean, how are you?” I enquired.

“Yes—it—it is”—she muttered, scarcely audible—her eye fixed unwaveringly upon me.

“Have you been in any pain during the night?” I continued.

Without removing her eyes, or making me any answer, she slowly drew up her right hand, all white and thin as it was, and laid it on her heart.

“Ah!” I whispered softly, partly to myself, partly to the nurse—“’tis the opium—not yet recovered from

it." She overheard me, shook her head slowly—her eyes continuing settled on me as before. I began to wonder whether her intellects were disturbed; for there was something in the settled stare of her eyes that shocked and oppressed me.

"I thought I should never have woke again!" she exclaimed in a low tone, with a faint sigh. "Suicide! *hereafter!*" she continued to murmur, reminding me of the words with which I had quitted her over-night, and which no doubt had been haunting her disturbed brain all night long. I thought it best to rouse her gently from what might prove a dangerous lethargy.

"Come, come, you must answer me a few questions. I will behave kindly to you"——

"Oh, Doctor ——!" exclaimed the poor girl, in a reproachful tone, turning her head slowly away, as if she wondered I thought it necessary to *tell* her I would use her kindly.

"Well, well, tell me then—how are you?—how do you feel?—have you any pain in breathing? Tell me in the softest whisper you can."

"Alive, Doctor—that's all. I seem disturbed in my grave! What has been done to me?—Who is that?" she enquired faintly, looking at the nurse.

"Oh! she has been sitting by you all night—she has been nursing you. I told you last night that I would send her to you!" Miss Edwards extended her hand towards the nurse, who gently shook it. "You're very kind to me," she murmured; "I—I don't deserve it."

"Every one, Miss Edwards, must be attended when they are ill. We want no thanks—it is our duty."

"But I am such a vile being"——

"Pshaw! you must not begin to talk in that way. Have you felt any fulness—a sort of choking fulness—about your chest, since I saw you last!" She did not seem to hear me, as she closed her eyes, and gave me no reply for several minutes. I repeated the question.

"I—I *can't* speak," she sobbed, her lips quivering with emotion.

I saw her feelings overpowered her. I thought it better to leave at once, and not agitate her; so I rose, and entreating the nurse to pay her all the attention in her power, and give her medicine regularly, I left, promising to return, if possible, at noon. Her state was extremely precarious. Her constitution had evidently been dreadfully shattered; every thing, in short, was at present against her recovering from the injury her lungs had sustained from the ruptured vessel. The least shock, the least agitation of her exquisitely excitable feelings might bring on a second fit of blood-spitting, and then all was over. I trembled when I reflected on the dangerous neighbourhood, the disgusting and disease-laden atmosphere she was breathing. I resolved to remove her from it, the instant I could do so with safety, to the Dispensary, where cleanliness and comfort, with change of scene, and assiduous medical attendance, awaited her. My wife was very anxious to visit her, and contribute all in her power towards her double restoration of body and mind; but that, of course, was impossible, as long as Miss Edwards lay in — Court.

I need not, however, delay the course of the narrative, by dwelling on the comparatively eventless week that followed. I attended my miserable patient twice and sometimes even thrice a-day, and was gratified at finding

no relapse; that she even recovered, though slowly, from the fierce and sudden attack that had been made on her exhausted constitution. During this time, as I never encouraged conversation, confining my enquiries to the state of her health, she said nothing either of interest or importance. Her mind was sunk into a state of the most deplorable despondency, evidenced by long, frequent, deep-drawn sighs. I learned from the nurse, that Miss Edwards sometimes moaned piteously during the night,—“O mother!—mother!—my mother!” She would scarcely open her lips from morning to night, even to answer the most necessary questions. On one occasion, I found she had opened a little purse that lay under her pillow, took out a solitary five-pound note, and put it unexpectedly into the nurse’s hands, which she clasped at the same time within her own, with a supplicating expression of countenance, as if begging of her to retain the money. When she found that the nurse was firm in her refusal, she put it back into her purse in silence.—“And your heart would have felt for her,” said the nurse, “if you had seen her sad face!” I need hardly perhaps mention, that she had pressed the little relic of her wretched gains upon me in a similar manner, till she desisted in despair. On Friday morning, as I was taking my leave of her, she suddenly seized my hand, pressed it to her lips, and, with more energy than her feeble state could well bear, gasped—“Oh, that I could but get out of bed to fall down on my knees before you to thank you!—Oh, it would relieve my heart!”

Monday, October 15th.—Yesterday morning I told Miss Edwards that I thought we might venture to re-
ve her to our dispensary on the following day; an

intimation she appeared to receive with indifference, or rather apathy. I also informed the infamous landlady of my intention, directing her to furnish me with whatever account she might have for lodging, &c., against my patient. Oh! how my soul abhorred the sight of, and sickened at speaking with that hideous bloated old monster! This morning I was at — Court by ten o'clock. Finding nobody stirring about the door, passage, or stairs, I ascended at once to the room of Miss Edwards. As I was passing the landing of the first floor, I overheard, through a half-open door, the voices of persons conversing together. No apology can be necessary for stating that, on distinguishing the words "Sall Edwards," I paused for a moment to listen what plot might be hatching against her.

"I tell you, we'd better lose no time," said the voice of a man in a gruff under-tone; "we've been here shilly-shallying, day after day, to no purpose all the week, till it's nearly too late. I know the — keeps it always under her pillow."

"But that creature he has brought to stop with her," replied a female voice—that of the hateful harridan who owned the house; "what the — are you to do with *her* the while?"

"Slap her face for her—knock her down and be off—that's my way of doing business. Do you remember old Jenkins, eh?"

There was a faint laugh.

"But why couldn't *you* go up, mother," said a female voice, "under pretence of making the bed, and so slip off with the purse?—Now *that* would be doing it snug, as I calls it."

"Lord—I make the bed? You know how Sall hates me; and, besides, what's that woman up stairs for, but to make the bed, and such like? It won't do—no, it won't."

"Well—I suppose I *must*."

"Then again, Ikey—there's that d—— officious doctor of hers."

"Oh, of course, he's as much on the look-out after it as we is, for the matter of that! He's waiting to grab the blunt himself! *He* calls it his 'fee!' ha, ha! *We* makes no bones on it, but calls it plain robbery—don't we, mother."

"But, mother," said a female voice I had not heard before, "remember poor Sall's dying."

"Well, slut," replied the old woman, "and what if she is? Then the loss of a few pounds can't signify, as she's a-going to the 'spensary, where they pays nothing."

"Well, well, mother," resumed the man's voice; "there's not a moment to be lost. I'd better do what I said."

I slipped like lightning down stairs—met nobody—hurried into the street—and instinctively ran towards the police-office, which was close by. I soon procured the assistance of an officer, with whom I hastened back to — Court. On our way I hurriedly explained to him the state of matters, and directed him to continue in Miss Edward's room till she was removed to the dispensary. When we reached the outer door of the house, I suppose my well-known companion was instantly recognised, for a girl at the door, no doubt on the look-out to see if the coast was clear, no sooner set eyes on him than she rushed back into the passage, followed by the officer and me. As she was setting her foot upon the stairs, the power-

ful hand of the officer snatched her back again into the passage. She was on the point of shouting out; but he silenced her by fiercely shaking his staff in her face.

"Aha, my lass! Only speak a word, and I'll break your head open!" said he. "Doctor, do you go up at once; and I'll follow you before you've reached the door. I only want to keep this young woman quiet till then."

I sprung up stairs in an instant. I met no one; but, on opening Miss Edwards's door, to my infinite alarm I beheld my usual seat by her bedside occupied by a burly ruffian of the lowest order. He seemed sitting quietly enough;—though the nurse was speaking to him in great agitation. On my entering the room, he turned round; then suddenly thrust his hand beneath Miss Edwards's pillow, and made for the door, with a hasty air of defiance. Before he had reached it, the officer on the stairs had thrust it open.

"Stop that man—he has stolen something," said I in as low a tone as my alarm would allow me; and the officer instantly collared him.

"I stolen something, you —— liar?" exclaimed the ruffian, in a low furious tone, turning towards me.

"Come—none o' that there jaw, Dick! Be quiet—be quiet, man!" and he presented to him a pistol ready cocked. "Now will you come down with me quietly?—or will you be carried down with your brains blown out? Quick!"

His prisoner appeared preparing for a struggle.

"I'm sorry for the sick lady, sir," said the officer, hurriedly, to me; "'twill frighten her, but I *must* fire."

"For God's sake, avoid it if possible," I gasped, in the utmost trepidation.

"Now, listen, Dick ——," said the officer, furiously tightening his grasp, till his bony knuckles seemed buried in the flesh of his prisoner—"if you stop a moment, d—— me—but I'll fire at you—come what may!" The pistol was almost touching his ear, and I turned away with horror, expecting every instant to hear the fatal report. I now heartily wished the fellow had taken all the money quietly off!

"Why—you devil! would you murder me!"—shouted the prisoner, dropping into a passive attitude—"where's your warrant?"

"Here!" replied the officer, pressing his pistol against his prisoner's cheek—"off with you!"

"Oh mercy! mercy! mercy!"—shrieked the voice of Miss Edwards, whom the loud voice of the thief had awoken from the deep sleep procured by sedative medicines. She started suddenly up in bed, into a kneeling posture, her hands clasped together—and her face turned towards the group at the door with the wildest terror.

I hurried to her side—implored her to be calm—and told her it was nothing but a slight disturbance—that I would protect her.

"Mercy! mercy! murder! mercy!" she continued to gasp, regardless of all I could say to her. The officer had by this time prevailed on his prisoner to quit the room peaceably—calling to me to bolt the door after him, and stay in the room till he came back. In a few moments all was quiet again. I passed the next quarter of an hour in a perfect ecstasy of apprehension. I expected to see a second fit of blood-spitting come on—to hear the vile people of the house rush up to the door, and burst it open. I knew not what to do. I explained to

Miss Edwards, as she lay panting in the bed, that the man who was taken off had entered the room for the purpose of robbing her of her five pounds.

“ I saw—I saw his face !” she gasped—“ they say—it is said—he murdered one of the”—— she could utter no more, but lay shaking from head to foot. “ Will he come back again ?” she enquired, in the same affrighted tone. By degrees, however, her agitation ceased, and, thank God !—(though I could not account for it)—there was no noise, no uproar heard at the door, as I had apprehended. I gave my patient a few drops of laudanum in water, to aid in quieting her system ; and prayed to God, in my heart, that this fearful accident might not be attended with fatal consequences to her !

The drowsy effects of the laudanum were beginning to appear, when the officer, accompanied by another, gently knocked at the door for admission.

“ He’s safe enough now, sir, and we’ve secured the money,” he whispered, as I met him half-way, with my finger on my lips.

“ The hackney-coach, sir, is waiting at the door,” said he in a low tone—“ the coach you ordered from the dispensary, they say. I ask your pardon, sir, but hadn’t you better take the lady away at once?—the sooner she leaves such a place as this, the better. There may be a disturbance, as these houses swarm with thieves and villains of all kinds, and there are but two of us here to protect you !”

“ How is it,” said I, “ that the people of the house make no disturbance, that they let you take off your man so easily ?”

“ Lord, sir, they durs’n’t ! They’re all at home—but

they know us, and durs'n't show their faces. They know 'tis in our power to take them off to the office as accomplices if we like! But hadn't you better make up your mind, sir, about removing of her?"

"True." I stood for a moment considering. Perhaps his advice was the best; and yet, could she bear it, after all this agitation? I stepped to the bedside. She was nearly asleep (our conversation had been carried on in the lowest whisper), and her pulse was gradually calming down. I thought it, on the whole, a favourable moment for at least making the attempt. I directed the nurse, therefore, to make the few necessary preparations immediately. In less than a quarter of an hour's time, we had Miss Edwards well muffled up, and wrapped in a large cloak belonging to the nurse. Her few clothes were tied up in a bundle: and the officer carried her down with apparently as much ease as he would have carried an infant. There was no noise, no hurry: and as the coach set off with us, I felt inexpressibly delighted, that at all events I had removed her from the hateful situation in which I had found her. We had not far to go. Miss Edwards, a little agitated, lay quietly in the nurse's arms, and, on the whole, bore the fatigue of removing better than could have been expected. The coachman drove through the quietest streets he could find; and by the time we stood before the dispensary gates, Miss Edwards had fallen asleep—for, be it remembered, the influence of the recently-given laudanum was upon her. On alighting, the nurse helped her into my arms. Poor creature! Her weight was that of a child! Though not a strong man, I easily carried her across the yard, and up stairs to the room that had been pre-

pared for her. When I had laid her on the bed, her short quick breathing, and flushed features, together with her exhausted air, and occasional hysteric starts, made me apprehensive that the agitation and excitement of the last hour or two had done her serious injury. I consoled myself, however, with the recollection, that under the peculiar exigences of the case, we could have pursued no other or better course; and that my unhappy patient was now where she would receive all the attention that could possibly be paid to one in her melancholy situation. As I gazed at her, there seemed fewer traces than before, of what she had been formerly. She looked more haggard—more hopelessly emaciated than I had before seen her. Still, however, I did not *despair* of in time bringing her round again. I prescribed a little necessary medicine, and, being much behind-hand with my day's engagements, left, promising to call, if possible, again in the evening. I comforted myself throughout the day with hopes of Miss Edwards's recovery, of her restoration, even, in some measure, to society—ay, even of introducing once more into the fold this, "tainted wether of the flock!"

[*Monday Evening to Saturday—inclusive.*]

Really there is something wonderful in the alteration visible in Miss Edwards! I am not the only one that thinks so. Some of her worst symptoms seem disappearing. Though she eats as little as ever, that little is eaten, she says, with some slight relish. Her voice is not so feeble as it was; the pain in her chest is not so oppressive; her spitting sometimes intermits; the fierce evening fever burns slacker; the wasting night-sweats abate a little. I am not, however, prematurely

sanguine about her ; I have seen too many of these deceitful rallyings to be easily deluded by them. Alas ! I know too well that they may even be looked upon as symptomatic of her fatal disorder ! But courage ! *Nil desperandum, auspice DEO* : she is in THY hands—I leave her there in humble confidence ; I bow to THY will !

Then again, may we not hope, in turn, to “minister” successfully “to the MIND diseased”—to cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff—which, not removed, will defy all the efforts of human art ? Yes, let us hope, “though against hope”—for methinks there is stealing over her features an aspect of serenity of which they have long been stripped—there are signs of rejoicing in the desert—of gladness in the wilderness and solitary place, and of blossoming in the rose.

Rays of her former sweetness of temper and manner are perceptible—which, with the knowledge of her sufferings, endear her to all around her. She has so won upon the attentive affectionate nurse, that the faithful creature will not hear of her place being supplied by another.

“ Well, Eleanor,” said I to her this morning, “ I’m delighted to find your pulse and tongue speak so well of you ; that the nurse can bear witness to the good night’s rest you have had ! I don’t hesitate to say, that if you go on in this way a little longer, I think I can hold out to you strong hopes of recovery !”

“ Recovery !” she exclaimed, with a deep sigh, shaking her head, “ do you think I am glad to hear it ?”

“ Dear me,” exclaimed the nurse, impatiently, “ that’s just the way the young lady keeps on with all the night and day through ! I tell her ’tis wrong, Doctor— isn’t it ?”

" 'Tis *always* wrong, surely," I replied, with a serious air, " to be unthankful to the Almighty for his blessings, especially such as Miss Edwards has received."

" Ah, Doctor, you wrong me ! I wish you could read my heart, and then tell me how it beats with gratitude towards HIM I have so heavily offended ! But why should I recover ? What is there in life for *me* ? Forgive me, if I say, Oh that Heaven, in its mercy, would let me die now ! I am happy, yes, happy, in the prospect of death ; but when I think of *life*, my joy fades suddenly !"

" Resign yourself, Eleanor, to the will of God ! He in his infinite wisdom must choose for you, life or death ! Learn to obey, with fear and trembling !"

" But how should I be otherwise than shocked at returning to the world—the scene of my horrible guilt—my black"—she paused, and turned pale. " Who would not spurn me with loathing ? The worms would turn against me !—Even this kind woman"—

" La, ma'am—and what of *me* ? Bless you ! Do you think *I* hate you ?" interrupted the honest nurse, with tears in her eyes.

" And, Eleanor—remember : did my *wife*, at any of the times she has been here"—

" No ! no ! no !" murmured the poor sufferer, her tears starting—and snatching my hand to her lips—" forgive me ! but how can I help it !" * * *

" Don't be distressed, Eleanor—if you should recover—about your future prospects," said I, as the nurse left the room—" there *are* ways of securing you a comfortable though perhaps a humble retreat ! The bounty of one or two kind individuals"—

"Doctor—Doctor"—she interrupted me ; when her emotion would not suffer her to say more.

"Don't be oppressed, Eleanor—don't over-estimate a little kindness," said I, thinking she overrated the small services I spoke of—"It will be but little, and that little cheerfully given, among five or six persons—and those ladies"—her emotion seemed to increase. "Well, well—if you dislike so much the sense of obligation, why cannot you lighten the sense of it, by trying to contribute a little to your own support ? Your accomplishments would easily admit of it."

"Dear Doctor—you mistake me !" she interrupted, having regained a measure of calmness—"I could tell you a secret that would astonish you"——

"A secret !"—I echoed with a smile—"Why, what about ?"

"I will tell you," said she, looking towards the door, as if apprehensive of interruption. I rose and bolted it.

"I am at this moment—believe me when I say it—worth £3000, and more than that ; all—all at my absolute command !"

I stared at her, first with astonishment, then with incredulity, and finally with concern—thinking her intellects disordered. I shook my head, involuntarily, at her.

"Doctor—disbelieve me, if you choose," she continued calmly,—“but I am serious. I do not speak, as you seem to imagine, deliriously—No, no ! This sum of money is really mine—mine alone ; and every farthing of it is in the funds at this moment !"

"Ah !" I interrupted her, the thought suddenly occurring to me, "your destroyer baited his hook splendidly"——

All the colour that had mantled her cheeks vanished suddenly, leaving them white as marble. She gazed at me for a few moments in silence—the silence I knew not whether of sorrow or scorn.

“No,” she replied at length, with a profound sigh, closing her eyes with her left hand, “*It* has never been polluted by *his* touch—or mine; it should perish if it had! No, no—it is not the price of my shame! Oh, Doctor, Doctor! am I then fallen so deeply, lower than I suspected even, in your estimation? Could you think I would have sold myself for **MONEY**!” She said this with more bitterness of tone and manner than I had ever seen in her.

“Well, Eleanor, be calm! Forgive me! I am very sorry I spoke so foolishly and hastily. I did not, however, dream of hurting your feelings, or attributing any thing so base to you!” She continued silent. “Eleanor, don’t you forgive me?” I enquired, taking her hand in mine.

“You have not offended me, Doctor; you cannot,” she replied, in tears. “It was the thoughts of my own guilt, my own infamy, that shocked me; but it is over! Oh, is it for such a vile wretch as me”—— She ceased suddenly, and buried her face in her hands.

“Doctor,” at length she resumed, calmer, though in tears, “I say this large sum of money is mine—wholly mine. It came to me through the death of a cousin at sea; and was left me by my uncle. *They* knew not of the polluted hands it was to fall into!” Again she paused, overpowered with her feelings. “But though I knew it was become mine, could *I* claim it! A wretch like me? No; the vengeance of God would have blighted

me ! I have never applied for it ; I never will ! I have often been starving ; driven to the most fearful extent of crime, scarce knowing what I was about ; yet I never dared to think of calling the money mine ! Guilty, depraved as I was, I hoped that God would view it as a penance, an atonement for my crimes ! Oh, God ! didst thou, wilt thou now accept so poor, so unworthy a proof of my repentance ! Even in dust and ashes it is offered !”

She ceased. My soul indeed felt for her. Poor girl, —what a proof, though perhaps a mistaken one, was here of the bitterness, the reality, of her contrition and remorse ! I scarce knew what reply to make to her.

“ I have now, however, made up my mind how to dispose of it ; in a manner which I humbly hope will be pleasing to God ; and may he accept it at my hands ! I wish”—— At this moment the returning footsteps of the nurse were heard. “ To-morrow—to-morrow, Doctor—a long history,” she whispered hastily.

I took the hint, opened the door, and the nurse entered. Miss Edwards was much exhausted with the efforts she had made in conversation ; and I presently took my leave, reminding her, significantly, that I should see her the next evening. Her concluding words led me to expect a narrative of what had befallen her ; but unless she proved much better able than she seemed now to undertake such a painful task, I determined to postpone it.

The next evening convinced me that I had acted imprudently in suffering her to enter into any conversation on topics so harrowing to her feelings. I found she had passed a very restless disturbed night ; and one or two painful symptoms re-appeared during the day. I resolved, for a long time to come, to interdict any but medical

topics ; at least, till she could better sustain excitement. Acting on this principle, little of interest transpired during any of the almost daily visits I paid her for the long period of eleven weeks. I persevered in the most anxious efforts, which I also enjoined on all about her, to supply her mind with cheerful topics, in the shape, chiefly, of works of innocent entertainment, chess, sewing, &c. &c. ; any thing, in short, that could give her mind something to engage it, instead of preying upon itself.

But let me here make devout and thankful mention of the inestimable support and comfort she received in the offices of that best, nay, that only solace of the bed of sickness and death—RELIGION. Let me also bear testimony here to the honourable and unwearied exertions in her behalf made by the intelligent and pious chaplain of the institution. If he be now alive, and I have no reason for supposing he is not, I know he will feel that satisfaction in reflecting upon the services this narrative must call to his recollection, if he see it, which not even the most flattering and public acknowledgment can supply to him. He watched over her with a truly pastoral care, an untiring zeal, that found its reward in bringing her to a full sense of her mournful condition, and in softening her heart to the hallowing and glorious influences of Christianity. He was at her bedside almost every other day, during the long interval I have mentioned. She several times received the sacrament ; and though she was more than once unexpectedly brought to the very margin of the grave, her confidence was not shaken. Truly, in the language of Scripture, “ a new heart was given unto her.” On one occasion of her receiving the sacrament, which she did with all the contrition and humility of Mary

Magdalen of old, I heard from Mr — that she was so overcome, poor girl, as that, in the very act of taking the cup into her hand, she burst out into hysteric weeping. The excitement increased; he described her features as wearing an expression of all but sublimity; and she presently burst into a strain of the most touching and passionate eloquence.

“ Oh, Saviour of the world,” she exclaimed, her hands clasped in an attitude of devotion, and her eyes fixed upwards, “ for my polluted lips to kiss thy blessed feet—that thou shouldst suffer me to wash them with my tears ! Oh, to stand behind thee, to hear thee forgive me all ! Yes, to hear thee speak ! To feel that thou hast changed me ! Thou hast gone into the wilderness; thou hast sought out the lost sheep, and brought it home with thee rejoicing ! Let me never wander from thee again ! My heart breaks with thankfulness ! I am thine ! Living or dying—do with me as thou wilt !”

Nor were such expressions as these the outpourings of mere delirium—rant, uttered in a transient fit of enthusiasm—but indications of a permanently altered state of feeling. Surely, call it what you will—enthusiasm, delirium, rant, canting—if it produce such effects as these, it must be blessed beyond all description; and, Father of the spirits of all flesh ! vouchsafe unto *me*, when in the awful agonies of passing from time into eternity—into Thy presence—oh, wilt thou vouchsafe to *ME such* enthusiasm, *such* delirium !

The little attentions my wife paid Miss Edwards in calling with me to see her, and sending her, from time to time, such delicacies as her circumstances required,

called forth the most enthusiastic expressions of gratitude. My pen can do no justice to the recollections that force themselves upon me, of her constant, overflowing thankfulness—of the peace and cheerfulness she diffused around her, by the unwavering serenity and resignation with which she bore her sufferings. She persisted in expressing her convictions that she should not recover; that she was being carried gently, not flung with headlong horror, into eternity. If ever a gloomy shadow would pass over her mind, and blanch her features, it was when her mind suddenly reverted to the dreadful scenes from which she had been so providentially rescued. The captive could not look back with wilder affright upon the tortures of the Inquisition, from which he was flying in unexpected escape, his limbs yet quivering with recollections of the rack!

It was an evening in March, in the ensuing year, that was appointed by Miss Edwards for communicating to me the particulars of her history—of her sufferings and her shame. She shrunk from the dreadful task—self-imposed though it was—saying, the only satisfaction she should experience in telling it, would be a feeling that it was in the nature of an expiation of her guilt. I had promised the preceding day to spend a long evening with her for the purpose of hearing her story. I arrived about half-past six o'clock, and the nurse, according to her instructions, immediately retired.

I wish the reader could have seen Miss Edwards as I saw her on that evening! She reclined propped up by pillows, upon a couch that had been ordered for her, and which was drawn near the fire. In the beautiful language of Sterne, "affliction had touched her appearance with

something that was unearthly." Her raven-black hair was parted with perfect simplicity upon her pale forehead; and the expression of her full dark eyes, together with that of her pallid wasted features, and the slender, finely-chiselled fingers of the left hand, which was spread open upon her bosom, reminded me forcibly of a picture of the Madonna, by one of the greatest old painters. I defy any person to have seen that unfortunate girl's face, even in total ignorance of her history, and to have easily forgotten it. On my entering the room, she laid aside a book she had been reading, and seemed, I thought, a little fluttered, aware of my errand—of the heavy task she had undertaken. I apprise the reader at once, that I fear I can give him but a very imperfect account of the deeply interesting narrative which I received from Miss Edwards' lips. I did not commit it to paper till about a week after I had heard it, circumstances preventing my doing it earlier. I have, however, endeavoured to preserve, throughout, as much of her peculiar turns of expression—sometimes very felicitous—as possible.

"Doctor, said she, speaking faintly at first, after answering a few of my usual enquiries concerning her health, "how I have longed for, and yet dreaded this day!" She paused, unable to proceed. I rung for a glass of water; and after she had taken a little, her agitation gradually subsided.

"Take time, Eleanor," said I gently—"don't hurry yourself.—Don't tell me a syllable more than is perfectly agreeable to yourself. Believe me—believe me, I have no impertinent curiosity, though I *do* feel a profound interest in what you are going to tell me."

She sighed deeply.

"But, Doctor, the blessed Scriptures say, that if we *confess* our sins"—the poor girl's voice again faltered, and she burst into tears. I also was much affected, and embarrassed—so much so, that I hesitated whether or not I should allow her to go on.

"Forgive me, Doctor," she once more resumed, "if I am shocked at finding myself beginning my bitter and disgraceful history. I do it in the spirit of a most humble confession of my errors. It will relieve my heart, though it may make you hate the poor fallen creature that is talking to you. But I know my days on earth are numbered."

"Eleanor! Don't say so; I assure you I have great hopes"——

"Doctor—forgive me," said she emphatically and solemnly, "I do not doubt your skill; but I shall never recover; and if it be the will of God, I would a thousand times rather die than live!—Oh, Doctor! I find I must begin with the time when you saw me both happy and virtuous, living with my mother. How little did I then think what was before me!—how differently you were hereafter to see me! Perhaps I need scarcely tell you that my heart in those days was rank with pride—a pride that aided me in my ruin! My poor mother has often, I dare say, told you of the circumstances which led her to seek a livelihood by keeping a boarding-house at a summer watering-place. I *endured* the change of circumstances; my mother *reconciled* herself to them—and a thousand times strove, but in vain, to bend the stubborn heart of her daughter into acquiescence with the will of Providence. I con-

cealed my rebellious feelings, however, out of pity to her; but they often choked me! They said, Doctor, that at that time I was beautiful. Yes, Doctor, look at me now," said she, with a bitter smile, "and think that I was once called beautiful!—Beautiful!—oh! that this face had been the ugliest of the ugly—frightful enough to scare off the Serpent!—But Heaven is wise! I am not vain enough to hesitate about owning that I saw how much I was admired—and admired sometimes in quarters that made my pulse beat high with ambitious hopes—hopes framed in folly, and to be, I need hardly say, bitterly disappointed. I read daily in the hateful novels which helped to unsettle my principles, of beauty alone procuring what are called high marriages; and would you believe, Doctor—foolish girl that I was—I did not despair of becoming myself the wife of a man of rank—of wearing a coronet upon my brow!—Oh! my guilty heart aches to think of several worthy and respectable young men who honoured me with proposals I spurned with scorn—with insolence. If reason—if common-sense had guided me—had I rather listened to the will of Heaven, uttered through the gentle remonstrances and instructions of my poor mother—I might have been, to this hour, a blooming branch upon the tree of society, and not a withered bough soon to fall off—but not, oh no, my gracious God and Father!—not into the burning!" exclaimed Miss Edwards, her voice faltering, and her eyes lifted up towards Heaven with a kind of awful hope.—"I need not weary you with describing the very many little flattering adventures I met with, too often, alas! to allow of the common duties of life being
's to me. Mrs —, Doctor," mentioning my

wife, "in happier times, would listen to them, and warn me not to be led away by them.

* * * *

"But let me come at once to the commencement of my woes. You may recollect the pleasant banks of the —? Oh, the happy hours I have spent there! I was walking, one Sunday evening, along the river side, reading some book—I now forget what—when I almost stumbled against a gentleman that was similarly engaged. He started back a step or two—looked at me earnestly for a moment—and, taking off his hat, with a high-bred air, begged my pardon. He looked so hard at me, that I began to fancy he knew me. I coloured, and my heart beat so violently, that I could scarcely breathe; for I should, indeed, have been blind not to see that my appearance struck him; how *his* affected *me*, let the remainder of my life from that hour tell in sighs and groans of anguish! He was the handsomest man I think I have ever seen. He seemed about thirty years old. There was something about his face that I cannot express, and his voice was soft—his manners were kind and dignified. Indeed, indeed, it was the hour of fate to me! He said something about 'blaming not each other for the interruption we had experienced, but the authors, whose works kept us so intently engaged,' in such a gentle tone, and his dark eyes looking at me so mildly, that I could not help listening to him, and feeling pleased that he spoke to me. I begged that he would not blame himself, and said he had done nothing to apologize for. He said not another word on the subject, but bowed respectfully, and talked about the beautiful evening—the silence—the scenery—and in such language! so glow-

ing, so animated, so descriptive, that I thought he must be a poet. All the while he was speaking, there was a diffident distance about him—a sort of fear lest he was displeasing me, that charmed me beyond what I could express, and kept me rooted to the spot before him.

“ ‘ I presume, madam, as you are so fond of waterside scenery,’ said he, ‘ you often spend your evenings in this way !’

“ I replied that I often certainly found my way there.

“ ‘ Well, ma’am,’ said he, with a sweet smile, ‘ I cannot think of interrupting you any longer. I hope you will enjoy this lovely evening.’

“ With this he took off his hat, bowed very low, and passed on. If he had but known how vexed I was to see him leave me ! I felt fascinated. I could not help looking behind me to see him, and to be sure, caught him also looking towards me. I would have given the world for a decent pretence for bringing him to me again ! My heart beat — my thoughts wandered too much, to admit of my reading any more ; so I closed my book, sate down on the white roots of a great tree that overshadowed the river, and thought of nothing but this strange gentleman. I wondered who he was—for I had never seen him before in the place, and teased myself with speculations as to whether he really felt towards me any thing further than towards a mere stranger. I went home. I sate down to the piano, where I began twenty different things, but could finish none of them. My mother wished me to write a letter for her ; I obeyed, but made so many mistakes, that she got angry, and wrote it herself after all. All night long did I think of this fascinating stranger. His soft voice was perpetually whispering in my

ear ; his bright piercing eyes were always looking at me. I woke almost every half hour, and began to think I must be surely, as they say, *bewitched*. I got quite alarmed at finding myself so carried away by my feelings. Can you believe all this ? You may call it love at first sight—any thing you choose. Would to Heaven it had been *hatred* at first sight ! That evening fixed a spell upon me. I was driven on I do not know how. I could not help taking a walk the next evening. It was nonsense—but I must needs take my book with me. My heart beat thick whenever I saw the figure of a gentleman at a distance ; but I was disappointed, for he whom I looked for did not come that evening. The next evening and the one after that, wretched fool that I was !—did I repair with a fluttering heart to the same spot—but in vain—the stranger did not make his appearance. On the Sunday evening, however, I unexpectedly met him, arm in arm with another gentleman. Gracious Heaven ! how pale and languid he looked—and his right arm in a sling ! He bowed—smiled rather pensively at me—coloured a little, I thought—and passed me. I found soon afterwards that a duel had been fought in the immediate neighbourhood, on Tuesday last, the day but one after the meeting I have described, between a Lord —— and Captain ——, in which the latter was wounded in the arm. Yes—then there could be no doubt—it was Captain —— whom I had talked to. And he had been in a duel ! Oh, Doctor, I dropped the newspaper which told me the circumstance. I trembled—I felt agitated, as if he had been not a stranger, but a relative. There was no concealing the truth from myself. I felt sick and faint at the thought of the danger he had been

exposed to; and such an interest in him altogether as I could not describe. Doctor—fool, wretched, weak fool that I was—already I loved him. Yes—an utter stranger—one who had never even given me a look or word beyond the commonest complaisance! The absurd notions I had got from novels came into my head. I thought of *fate*, and that it was possible our feelings were mutual—with much more nonsense of the same sort. I was bewildered all day—and told my mother I felt poorly. Poor, good, deceived mother! she was for having *advice* for me!

“Two or three evenings after, we met again. My heart melted to see his pale features, his languid air. Somehow or another—I forget how—we got again into conversation; and I at once taxed him with having fought a duel. What—oh what could have prompted me? He blushed, and looked quickly at me, with surprise but not displeasure; saying, in a low tone, something or other about his ‘pride at being an object of my sympathy.’ Doctor —, I can but again and again ask you to bear with me in this history of my guilt and folly! Before we parted, I was actually imprudent enough to accept his arm. We often met at that spot afterwards, and by appointment. I was enchanted with my new companion, there was something so elegant, so fashionable, so refined about him. I found he was an officer in a regiment of cavalry, and staying at —, on account of ill health. He must have been blind, indeed, not to have seen that I doated—yes, sigh, Doctor!—that I doated upon him; but when I was one evening infatuated, mad enough, to beg him *not to appear to know me*, if he should happen to meet me walking with my mother, or any

one else, you will surely believe that I must have been possessed by Satan! The moment the fatal words were out of my mouth, I snatched my arm out of his, started back, and turned very pale and faint. I am sure I must—for he instantly asked me with alarm if I was ill. Ill! I was ready to sink into the earth out of his sight! His winning ways, however, soon made me forget all—forget even, alas, alas! that I now stood fatally committed to him! When I returned home, I felt oppressed with a guilty consciousness of what I had done. I could not look my mother in the face. I felt stupified at recollecting what I had said, but with great effort concealed all from my mother. It is needless to say, that after this Captain —— and I met on the footing of lovers; I expecting him, on each occasion, to propose marriage; and he walking by my side, talking in a strain that set my soul on fire with passionate admiration for him. What a charming what a delightful companion! Forgetting, for a moment, all the nonsense of novels, I felt I could have adored him, and made him my husband, had he been the poorest of the poor! When he was not with me, he would write me sometimes two or three letters a-day, which he contrived to send me without their falling under my mother's notice—and such letters! If you—even you, had seen them, you would have owned how unequal was the struggle! At length I felt piqued at his hesitation, in not saying something decisive and satisfactory on the subject that was nearest my heart; but on the very morning when I thought I had made up my mind to tell him we must part, for that I should get myself talked of in the town, and alarm my mother—he saved me all farther anxiety, by telling me,

in enthusiastic terms, that he felt he could not live without me, and asked me if I had any objection to a private marriage; adding that his father was a haughty, selfish man, and all the other falsehoods that have ruined—and alas, alas! will *yet* ruin, so many wretched girls! Wo, wo, wo is me that I listened to them—that I believed all—that, indeed, Captain —— could have scarce said any thing I would not have believed! I must have been, alas! given over to destruction not to understand—never once to reflect on the circumstance of his refusal ever to come to our house to see my mother, or allow me to breathe a hint about what had passed between us! Alas, had but a daughter's heart glowed with a thousandth part of the love towards her mother, with which that mother's yearned towards *her*—a moment's sigh—an instant's confidence—would have broken the charm—would have set me free from the spoiler! 'I must keep my old father in the dark about this matter, as you your mother, Eleanor,' said he, 'till the marriage is over, and then they cannot help themselves!' He talked to me in this strain for nearly a month; for my better angel helped me to fight against him so long—flashing incessantly before me the figure of my poor, precious, heart-broken mother—and I refused to listen to his proposals. But at last he prevailed. He talked me to death on the subject; persuaded me that if I would elope, I could leave a letter, telling my mother how soon she would see me the wife of Captain ——; and at last I began to think in the same way.

“‘Dear, dear Captain ——! How much I am trusting to you!’ said I, one night, weeping, after he had wrung a reluctant consent from me. ‘Oh, don’t—don’t

bring down my poor mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!'——

“‘My dear, sweet, good girl!’ he exclaimed, folding me fondly in his arms, and kissing me in a sort of transport. I felt then confident of my safety! That very evening did I write the proposed letter to my mother, telling her of all. Oh, how I tried to crowd my whole heart into every word! My colour went and came—my knees shook—my hands trembled—my head swam round—I felt cold and hot by turns. I got the letter written, however, and stepped into bed—a sleepless one, you may imagine. That night—that very night—I dreamed a dream that might have saved me: that I looked out of bed and saw a beautiful but venomous snake gliding about under the chest of drawers, near the windows. It shocked me as I gazed shudderingly at it, but I did not once think of Captain ——. Alas, I have since!

“The next day, my injured, unsuspecting mother had fixed for paying a visit to a friend who lived some few miles off, whence she would not return till the day after. Monster—monster—perfidious creature that I was! I chose the first night that my mother and I had been separated for years—the time when she had left all in my care—to forsake her and home, to elope at midnight with my destroyer in a coach-and-four for Gretna Green! We set off—oh that horrible night—that”—— Here Miss Edwards turned suddenly deadly pale. Her manner had for some time shown increasing agitation, though she spoke with undiminished energy till she uttered the last words.

“I cannot suffer you to proceed any farther this eve-

ning, Eleanor," said I, forcing some water to her lips, "your efforts have exhausted you!"

"She nodded, and attempted to speak, but her voice failed her.

"To-morrow shall I come, if you find yourself better?" She nodded acquiescence. I called in the nurse immediately, ordered some little quieting medicine for Miss Edwards, and left the nurse to prepare her for bed.

I have omitted much that she told me—much that might have added to the powerful effect her simple and touching mode of telling it might have produced upon the reader, had I given it entire—lest I should fatigue his attention.

The next evening found us again together as on the preceding. I entreated her not to resume her narrative, if it were painful to her—observing her in tears when I entered.

"Yes, Doctor—indeed I am pained; but let it wring my heart as it may, I must go on with the black story I have commenced. Do but be prepared to hear with forgiveness much that will shock you—that will make you look on me with loathing—no, no then—I will say, pity!

"I cannot pain you with a particular account of the means by which my destroyer succeeded in effecting my ruin. Once in the accursed travelling-carriage, we went, I afterwards found, in a far different direction to that of Gretna Green. I think I must have been mad throughout the journey. I recollect nothing distinctly; all seems yet in a mist—a mist of excitement, of mingled apprehension and delight. Captain —— was all tenderness, all persuasion. He kept me in a constant whirl. He

never suffered me to be left alone for an instant—to think of what I was doing. No—*that* was not his plan ! For two days, I do not think I had leisure to look back, and reflect on what I had left. I felt—strange, dreadful to say—no uneasiness. Oh, my very heaven was to be in the company of Captain ——, to look at him, to hear him speak to me, to think he was now mine, *mine* for life ! But on the morning of the third day”—here she shuddered from head to foot, and paused—“ I awoke in a fright ; for I had been dreaming about the serpent I had dreamed of before we eloped. Then it glided about under the drawers at a distance ; NOW it was writhing about on the very bed on which I lay ! The vividness of my dream awoke me, as I said, in horror. Alas, my eyes were opened ! BESIDE me lay the serpent !

“ I shrieked aloud—I sprung out of bed—I tore my hair with frantic gestures. He leaped out after me in consternation, and attempted to pacify me, but in vain. My cries brought an elderly, respectable female into the room. He told her that ‘ his wife ’ was only in hysterics—that I was unfortunately subject to them. I recollect nothing more distinctly of that dreadful day. By the next, with Belial cunning and persuasion, he had soothed and flattered me into something like my former insensibility to my situation. I felt as if it were useless to resist his influence ! Before the week was over we were in Paris. Not all the myriad gaieties of that place, however, could lull or distract the worm from gnawing at my heart ! For three weeks I was incessantly in tears—often in hysterics. Captain —— behaved to me with exquisite tenderness. He spent immense sums in procuring me amusement ; and, in a month longer, I found

—spite of myself—my sorrow wearing off. He had accustomed me gradually to wine, and at length he was obliged to check my increasing propensity to it with anger. Once—once only, do I recollect having mentioned the sacred name of my mother. He presently produced me a letter, which he pretended to have received from a friend at —, where I had lived ; which said that my mother, on finding out what I had done, burnt the letter I had left for her—cursed me—called me by an infamous name, and vowed solemnly never to receive or acknowledge me again. How I recollect one sentence he read me !

“ ‘ The old woman goes on much as usual, only very furious when her daughter’s name is mentioned. She says, as the slut has made her bed, so she must lie upon it ! ’

“ How—oh, how could I be for an instant deceived by such a shallow—such an infamous fabrication ? I know not ; strange as it may seem, I *wished* to think it true, to pacify myself—to blunt the horrid sting of remorse. The Devil, too, had blinded me !

“ From that time, I began to find my feelings dulled, and got in a manner SATISFIED with my situation ! I had talked about *marriage* till he almost struck me in his fury ; and I got wearied and frightened out of my importunities. We spent some time on the banks of the beautiful Rhine, and travelled over the most delicious parts of Switzerland ; after which we returned again to Paris. Altogether, we spent about seven months in France. Towards the latter part of that time, stupified as I was, I discovered a gradual but melancholy change in his manner towards me. He seemed trying, I thought, to disgust me with him ! He introduced to

our table some English friends of his, noblemen and others, and did not seem to care how pointedly they paid their attentions to me, nor how I received them. Then he began to get piqued at 'my impropriety,' he said. That gave him a handle of offence against me. Our life was thenceforth one of incessant bickering. He began to talk about his leave of absence having expired—that he must return to England. He told me, at length, abruptly, that he had but ten days longer to continue in France, as his regiment was unexpectedly ordered off for India, and I must return to England with him instantly. Return to England? The thought was horror! The day before that fixed for our return to England, I eloped with Lord —, an extravagant, dissipated, but handsome young man; and we bent our course towards Rome. There I did indeed blazon my shame. I was allowed whatever dress—whatever ornaments I chose to order. I quite shone in jewellery—till I attracted universal attention. Alas, too well I knew the answer given to the perpetual enquiry—'Who is she?'—Bear with me, kind Doctor—bear with me in my guilty story, when I tell you that in less than three months I quitted Lord —, for the society of an Italian nobleman; his, for that of a French Count—and there I shall pause.

"Within two years of my first arrival in France, I found myself in Paris—alone. Ill health had considerably changed my appearance, and of course unfitted me, in a measure, for the guilty life I had been leading. My spirits had fallen into the lowest despondency; so that Sir —, the man with whom I had last lived, quitted me in sudden disgust, with not more than a hundred pounds in my pocket—to manage as I could for myself.

“ I lived alone at Paris for nearly three weeks, doing little else than drink wine and take laudanum. Then I began to long for England, though I dreaded to see it. The flutter of my heart almost choked me when I thought of home. .

“ Restless as an evil spirit, I knew not what to do with myself, or whither to go. Still something drew me to England, and accordingly I abruptly left France, and arrived at London in December. In the packet, I happened to meet a gentleman I had often seen at Captain ——’s table. Careless and stupified, I heeded not what I did ; so he had but little difficulty in persuading me to accept his lodgings in London as mine. I lived with him about a month. Is not all this frightful, Doctor ?” exclaimed Miss Edwards, abruptly. I shook my head, and sighed.

“ Yes !” she resumed, echoing my sigh from the very depths of her bosom ; “ it is an awful catalogue of crime indeed ; but let me hasten through it, Doctor, while I have strength, for I sicken with the story.

“ When I was left alone in London, my spirits grew more and more depressed. I felt sinking into what is called melancholy madness. I went one evening to Drury-Lane Theatre, almost stupified with wine, which I had been drinking alone, for I should really have destroyed myself but for the excitement of wine. I need hardly say to what part of the boxes a young woman, elegantly dressed, and alone, was ushered. It was that allotted to my miserable sisters in guilt. I sat at the corner of the boxes, a large shawl almost concealing me from head to foot. The orchestra was playing the overture. Oh, how sick, how faint that music made me, which all others listened to with ecstasy. It was of a pensive description,

sad, but sweet beyond imagination ; and it affected me so powerfully, that I was obliged to rush from the place, and seek fresh air. I returned in about half an hour. The vast house had completely filled while I was away ; all was light and splendour ; and the merry audience was shaking with laughter at the scenes of a favourite comedy. I—I could not laugh, but rather scream with the agonizing intensity of my feelings.

“ ‘ La, how she sighs !—Mighty fine, to be sure,’ exclaimed a rude wretch that sat beside me glaring in finery. My heart drooped under the insult. I could not resent it. I gazed languidly at the happy people occupying the private boxes. How I envied them ! In casting my eye round them, it fell on a party in that nearest but one to me. Gracious God ! it was Captain —— with three ladies, one of them very beautiful ; and he was paying her the most anxious attentions.

“ I remember no more till I found myself, early in the morning, in bed at my lodgings, attended by a girl in fine clothes. I then found, on enquiry, that I had suddenly fallen back on the floor of the boxes in a swoon, and was immediately carried out, attended by a girl that sat near me, who, having found by a paper in my pocket where I lived, brought me home. The woman of the house insisted on my quitting it immediately. I owed her no rent ; ‘ But that was all one,’ she said ; ‘ I was a slut, and must be off !’ The girl I spoke of refused to leave my room till I had a little recovered ; and easily persuaded me to accompany her to her lodgings. I had about £30 with me, and a few articles of elegant and expensive dress. I lay in bed at my new residence for two days, without once rising ; and no words can tell the horror that was upon

quivering heart at that moment!—I sate down upon the wet steps of a house nearly opposite. I wrung my hands—I bit my lips with the intensity of my anguish—for I was afraid of alarming the yet sleeping neighbourhood with a shriek. At length an old man came slowly past, leading a horse. I asked him, with a faltering voice, where Mrs—— (my mother) lived? He was deaf—and I was obliged to shout the name into his ear—though the effort seemed to exhaust all the little breath I had.

“ ‘ Oh—Mrs——?—why—let me see! Her whose daughter ran off with the officer some time since?’ ”

“ I nodded, though my eyes could no longer distinguish the person I was speaking to.

“ ‘ Why—poor old lady—she’s been dead this year and a half’——

“ ‘ I heard no more. I did not faint—I did not fall—I did not utter a sound—but while he was speaking, walked away steadily and rapidly. My body seemed to swell as I went on. I felt as if I hardly touched the ground. Strange lights were before my eyes. My head seemed whirling round and round. As I walked in this strange way, a coach passed me. I stopped it—found it was going up to London, and got on at once.

“ ‘ Going all the way up to London, young woman?’ said the gruff guard.

“ I told him I was—and spoke not a word more, till we reached the coach-office in London. I had no money about me except a shilling or two, and the fare was a pound. They helped me off the coach; and when they found I could not pay my fare, abused me dreadfully—called me an impostor—and handed me over to a constable, who took me to the police-office as a swindler. The

magistrate, who was just leaving, soon disposed of the case. The coachman made his charge; and the magistrate sternly enquired how I dared to act so dishonestly? I fell down on my knees, scarce knowing where I was, or what I was doing. He looked hard at me, and seemed to pity me.

“‘Is it worth while to follow up proceedings against such a wretched creature as this?’ he said, and flung me a small piece of silver. I fell down at full length on the floor, with a faint scream; and was, in an hour or two, sent off to the hospital. There I lay for six weeks, ill of a brain fever, which had several times nearly put an end to my wretched existence. When I was discharged, I had nothing to put on, and no home to go to. At the same time, another young woman left the hospital; who, seeing my utter destitution, invited me home with her, for at least a day, till I could turn myself about. She conducted me to a regular house of infamy! I wrote immediately to a gentleman, who had promised to send me money whenever I asked him. It was my first application, and was successful. He sent me £10 immediately, begging me not to write to him any more.—Shall I go on!

“With part of this sum, I purchased gay clothes, and commenced—yes, the accursed life of a common prostitute! I seemed altogether changed since my visit to —, and my illness in the hospital. My poor mother now dead—murdered—murdered by her vile daughter—I had scarce a relation in England that I knew of. Society, I was shut out from for ever. I lived in a state of mind that I cannot describe; a sort of calm desperation—quite indifferent what became of me—often wishing that I might drop down dead in the streets. I seldom passed three hours in the day sober; every

farthing of money I could procure was instantly changed for the most scorching *spirits* ! But I will not torture you with describing the life I led for a year after this ; it was that of a devil ! A few things, however, I may mention. As I was standing at the box-entrance of the theatre one night, in company with several other women like myself, I unexpectedly saw Captain ——, handing a splendidly dressed lady out of a carriage. Without my wishing it—before, indeed, I was aware of it, his eye fell upon me, and he knew me. He turned ghastly pale ; and was obliged to return back into the carriage with the lady, his wife, I suppose, and drive home. Perhaps he thought I should make myself known ; but no—I turned fainter far than he, and staggered away to some steps on which I sate down to recover myself. By means of a Court Guide, which, by some accident or other, found its way into my hands, I soon afterwards found out where he lived. I often went, late at night, when it was dark and wet, so that no one seemed likely to be stirring, and paced to and fro before the large house where he lived, with feelings none can tell. How often has my heart's fluttering half-choked me, while I have listened to the sound of the piano in the drawing-room ! No doubt, thought I, his wife is playing to him, and he is leaning over her seat looking at her fondly ! Oh ! the hours—the nights I have passed in this wretched way ! I thought myself more like a fiend haunting him, than any thing human. And yet, dreadfully as he had injured me, I would have died before I could have annoyed him ! And Doctor, I have done the same often towards another house in London. There, also, have I paced for hours—bitter hours—and that house was *yours* !” She burst into tears,

and was several minutes before she could resume her narrative. I suggested that I would hear her proceed with her history at some future day—but she told me it was now nearly over. At length she resumed

“ I once walked several streets after you and Mrs —, and felt as if I could have kissed the ground you walked on. I dared not draw near, lest I should pollute you—lest I might, horrid creature, be seen and recognised ; and when I lost sight of you, I had nothing for it but to hurry home, and drown my agony in drink. Did you never hear of my elopement, Doctor, before now ? ” she enquired abruptly. I answered that I had not ; that, as the air did not suit my wife, we never went again to — ; and that after she and Miss Edwards had ceased corresponding, the pressure of domestic and professional engagements prevented our enquiring after her. She sighed, and proceeded.

“ I have often seen in places of amusement, and in the streets, some of the persons to whom Captain — introduced me in France, but they either could not, or would not, recognise me—and I never attempted to remind them of me. At length, however, even liquor was insufficient to keep up my spirits. I wandered about the streets—I herded with the horrible wretches about me—as if I was only half aware of what I did and where I was. I would have lived alone—but I dared not ! The most dreadful thoughts assailed me. The guilt of my past life would often gleam back upon me in a way that almost drove me mad, and I have woke a whole house with my moanings ! To occupy my thoughts, when obliged to be alone, I used to send for the papers, in one of which, while carelessly casting my eyes over the list of deaths, I saw the

name of my cousin, by which I knew at once that I was entitled, as I told you before, to the sum of £3000. I instantly determined never to touch it—never to apply for it. I felt I had no business with it; that the dead would shake in their graves if I stretched out my hands towards it. Once I saw my name at the head of an advertisement, stating that by applying somewhere or other I should hear of something to my advantage! I had resolved, in my own mind, to leave the whole, when I died, to a particular charity, on condition that they would not allow my name to be known. You can guess the charity I mean, Doctor?" She paused, as if waiting for an answer.

"The Magdalen Hospital?" said I, in a low tone.

"Yes," she replied with a sigh—"but to return, Doctor, let me now tell you of a dreadful circumstance, marking indeed the hand of Providence, which occurred only about six months before the period when you first saw me at — Court. As I was walking, about five o'clock in the afternoon, in Oxford Street, miserable as I always was, both at home and abroad, I heard a sudden shout of alarm in the street; and on turning round, saw every thing clearing hastily out of the way of a horse galloping along like lightning towards where I stood, its rider evidently almost falling from his seat. As I stood near one of the cross-streets, the horse suddenly shot past me, round the corner, and, frightful to tell, in the act of turning round, swift as light, being, I suppose, startled by some object or other, threw its unfortunate rider over its head with stunning force against a high iron pump, and galloped off faster than before. A crowd of course collected instantly about the sufferer; and I could not help

joining it, to find out whether or not the gentleman was killed. The crowd opened suddenly in the direction in which I stood, making way for two men who were carrying their stunned and bleeding burden to a doctor's shop close by. He was quite motionless, and the blood pouring from his head. The sight made me, you may suppose, sick and faint, but"—she paused—"Doctor," she continued with a gasp, her face blanching with the recollection, "a glance at the countenance, half covered with blood though it was, showed me the features of Captain ——!" Here Miss Edwards again became exceedingly agitated, trembling from head to foot and continuing deadly pale. I also felt deeply shocked at the incident she had been telling. At length, in a broken and rather indistinct tone, she proceeded, "I shrieked at the spectacle, and swooned, and was helped by same bystanders to an adjoining shop, which it was nearly an hour before I could leave, in a hackney-coach, for my lodgings. I never recovered the shock of that terrible occurrence. The next day's newspaper, which you may believe I bought with sickening apprehension, announced that Captain —— had been killed on the spot, and that his heart-broken widow was within only a few days of her confinement.

"The moment I recognised the bleeding body, as I have told you, a strange pain shot across my breast. I felt—I knew it was my death-stroke—I knew I had not long to live—that the destroyer and his victim would soon be once more within the dreadful sight of each other!—My health and spirits—if it is not a mockery to call them such, soon broke down altogether; every night was I scared with the spectre of Captain ——, every day tortured with the recollections of his bleeding corpse, and the horrid

associations of my past and present guilt!—Unable to follow my foul, revolting line of life as before, I wandered like a cursed spirit, from one house of infamy to another, each worse than the former,—frequently beaten with cruel violence, half-starved, and sometimes kicked out of doors into the street, because—I would not *work*!—Twice have I been dragged disgracefully before a magistrate, on false accusations of robbing the vile wretch that owned the house in which I lived!—I have lodged in places that were filthier than hog-sties; I have heard robberies planned—and have listened with silent horror to schemes for entrapping the innocent of both sexes to their destruction. Once—once only I dared a whisper of remonstrance—and it earned me a blow from the old Jewess with whom I lived, that stretched me senseless on the floor amid the laughter and derision of the wretches around us. Pressed by horrid want, I have plied the detestable trade I exercised—and been compelled to smile and caress those who choose to call for me—to drink with them—at the moment when my heart was dying within me! when I felt that consumption was working deeper and deeper into my vitals!

“About three weeks before you saw me, I happened to be prowling about the streets, when my haggard appearance struck a gentleman who was passing by on horseback. He eyed me earnestly for some moments, and then suddenly dismounted, and gave his horse into the hands of his servant. He had recognised me—spite of the dreadful alteration in my appearance—told me he had known me in what he called, alas! my ‘earlier and better days’—and I recognised in him the nobleman for whose company I had quitted Captain ——! He could

hardly speak for the shock he felt. At length he uttered a word or two of commiseration—and taking out a bank-note from his pocket-book, which I afterwards found was for twenty pounds—he gave it me, telling me to look after my health—and, a little agitated, I thought, left me, as if ashamed to be seen for an instant speaking with such a wretched object as myself!—I, who had £3000 and more at my command, accepted the *charity*—the bitter charity of this gentleman, with sullen composure—or resignation—as I thought; fancying, that by so doing, I was, in a manner, atoning for the enormity of my crimes. At the moments of my utmost need, when fainting beneath the agonies of starvation—I felt a savage pleasure in thinking how much money I had within my reach, and yet refused to touch!—Guilty—ignorant creature—as if this could have been viewed with satisfaction by Him—Him whom I had most offended! With the help of this £20, which I was afraid to trust myself with in the house where I then resided, for fear of being robbed—perhaps murdered by those about me, I went over to a distant part of the town, and took up my residence—I forget how—in the filthy place from which you rescued me. I had not been there long, before I took to my bed, finding it impossible to drag my aching—my trembling limbs more than a few steps at a time. I felt that death had at last got his cold arms completely around me; and, partly in despair—partly under an influence I knew not how to resist—kind, inestimable Doctor, I sent off the line that brought you like an angel of mercy to my bedside!—My life at that place, though for so short a period, was a perpetual hell—worse, I found—far worse than any I had before known.

“ Why did not I, you may ask, with the £20 I have been speaking of, seek out a decent and virtuous place of residence ? I can only answer—ask the Devil—the Devil that never once left me ! Guilty myself, I went naturally to the haunts of guilt : I could not—I dared not go to any other !—And suppose I had taken lodgings at a place of good character—that such people would have received a wretch such as I too plainly appeared—what was I to do when the £20 was gone ?—No ; I preferred keeping in the black waters of pollution, till they closed over me ! But I was saying how dreadfully I was treated in the last house to which I removed, and where you found me. When too late, I discovered that it was a noted house of call for—thieves, in addition to its other horrors ; and the scenes I was compelled to witness, I cannot attempt to describe !—Would you believe it, Doctor ?—one morning, the woman who called at your house actually struck me upon the mouth, till the blood gushed out, because I told her I was too ill to get out of bed and accompany the rest of her wretched flock to some place of low entertainment !—I submitted to it all, however, as to purgatory—thinking I might as well die there as any where else !—Believe me, Doctor—in my ignorance, my blindness to the horrors of hereafter—I looked on death, and longed for it—as a worn-out traveller looks out for the place of his evening’s rest ! I expected to find in the grave, the peace, the quiet, the forgetfulness which the world denied me : and as for any thing *beyond*, my mind had grown unable to comprehend the thoughts of it—to understand any thing about it. But from this long and dismal dream—this trance of guilt and horror—the Providence of God”——

Miss Edwards here paused, and languidly drew her handkerchief over her face, which showed me, alas, by its colour and expression, how much she was exhausted. While I was speaking to her, in as kind a tone of sympathy as my emotion would admit of—for I need hardly say how I felt overcome with her long and melancholy narrative—she fainted. Though I used every known means, on the impulse of the moment, to recall her to consciousness, they seemed of no avail: and, greatly alarmed, I summoned in the nurse, and the apothecary. As the latter entered, however, she slowly opened her eyes, and a sigh evidenced the return of consciousness. I continued by her side for nearly half an hour longer, speaking all the soothing things my heart could devise—imploping her not to harrow herself with useless recollections of the past.

“But—what a wretch—what a monster must you think me, Doctor!” she exclaimed, faintly, averting her face. “Is not the air I breathe, pollution?”

“Eleanor, Eleanor! The Redeemer of the world said not so to the trembling one that washed his feet with her tears.” The poor girl, overpowered with the recollection, sobbed hysterically several times, and clasped her hands in an ecstasy of emotion—murmuring, but so indistinctly I could scarce catch the words—“He said—go in peace!”

* * * * *

“That blessed history,” she continued, when a little recovered, “is all that makes life tolerable to me. I cling to it, as an earnest of the pardon of Heaven! Oh, it was written for me—for the guilty such as me—I feel, I *know* it was! Oh! world, cruel world—I can bear your scorn! I can bear the finger of contempt pointed at me!

I can submit to hear you curse me—I turn from you my eyes—I look to Him, I listen only to HIM that looked on Mary, and forgave her !”

“ Well, Eleanor, such thoughts as these are sent to you from heaven ! HE whom you speak of has heard, and answered you !—But I must not stay here. I see your feelings are too much excited ; they will injure you. You must be got into bed immediately—and if you wish it, the chaplain shall read a prayer beside you ! Farewell, Eleanor, till to-morrow ! May your thoughts this night be of happier hue ! Sleep—sleep easier, breathe freely, now that so black a burden has been removed from your feelings !”

She uttered not a word, but grasped my proffered hand with affectionate energy. I returned home, filled with mournful recollections of the sad story I had heard, and humble hopes that the mercy of Heaven might yet beam brightly upon the short period that was allotted her upon the earth ! The next day, as indeed I anticipated, I found Miss Edwards in a very low depressed frame of mind, suffering the re-action consequent upon excitement. Poor girl, she would not be persuaded but that I only *forced* myself to see her, from a sense of duty ; that her touch, her presence, was intolerable ; that what I had listened to of her confession, had made me despise her.

“ Oh !” she exclaimed, with bitter emotion, “ how I abhor and hate myself for having told you so much ; for having so driven from me my only friend !” For a time, not all my most solemn assurances availed to convince her how deeply she was mistaken. She shook her head and wrung her hands in silent wretchedness. She even despaired of the mercy of Heaven. All this, however, I

saw, was only a temporary mood of feeling, which I hoped would shortly disappear. She would not allow me, but with difficulty, to shake hands with her on leaving. Her whole frame shrunk from me as she exclaimed,—“ Oh, touch me not !” To my great regret, and even astonishment, she continued in this melancholy humour for a whole week, till I accused myself of imprudence and cruelty in suffering her to tell me her history. My wife, on her return to London, called upon her ; and her cordiality and affection a little re-assured the sorrow-smitten sufferer, and had far more effect than all the medicine of the dispensary, and “ the physicians there,” could do for her.

We supplied her, at her own earnest wish, with a little employment, to divert her mind from preying upon her already lacerated feelings. She worked at small articles of sewing, embroidery, &c. &c., which were afterwards taken, at her desire, to a charitable bazaar in the neighbourhood. The interest taken in her case by the other medical attendants at the dispensary, was almost as great as that I felt myself. All that our united experience could suggest, was anxiously done for her. Every symptom of danger was anxiously waited for, watched, and, with the blessing of Providence, expelled. All the nourishment she was capable of receiving, was given her in the most inviting form. My wife, the chaplain, myself, and the resident apothecary, were frequent visitors, for the purpose of keeping her spirits in cheerful and various exercise ; and, with the aid of Heaven, these combined efforts proved eminently successful. I have very rarely, in the case of consumption, known a patient recover from such a hopeless degree of bodily and mental prostration, so satisfactorily as Miss Edwards. Her whole nature,

indeed, seemed changed; her gentle, cheerful, graceful piety—if I may be allowed the expression—made piety lovely indeed. Not that she gave way to what is too often found to be the exacerbations arising from mere superstition acting upon weakened powers; that she affected what she did not feel, and uttered the sickening slang of cant or hypocrisy. There was a lowliness, a simplicity, a fervour, a resignation about her, that could spring from sincerity alone!

The chaplain had given her a copy of the incomparable—the almost divine “Saints’ Rest” of Baxter. Morning, noon, and night, did she ponder over its pages, imbibing their chastening, hallowing, elevating spirit; and would often lay down the book in a kind of transport, her features glowing with an expression that rivalled my recollections of her former beauty. * * *

She was soon able to bear the motion of a hackney-coach, and, attended by her faithful nurse, took several drives about the airiest parts of the suburbs. In short, her recovery was marked by the most gratifying signs of permanency. How my heart rejoiced after so long, painful, and anxious, often hopeless, an attendance on her, to enter her neatly-arranged room, and see her, not stretched upon the bed of agony and death—not turning her pale face to the wall, her soul filled with frightful apprehensions of an infinitely more frightful hereafter, but sitting “clothed, and in her right mind,” reading beside the window, or walking to and fro, supported by the nurse, her figure, elegant and beautifully moulded, yet painfully slender, habited in a neat dark dress; for “*white*,” she said with a sigh, “she was now unworthy to wear,—white—the vesture of the innocent!” With what honest

pride, too, did the nurse look at her,—her affectionate heart overjoyed at witnessing a recovery her own unwearied attentions had so materially conducted to ensure!

Finding Miss Edwards's convalescence so encouraging and steady, I proposed to her, seriously, to make claim, through a respectable solicitor, to the property she was entitled to, and employ a part of it in engaging a small cottage, a few miles from town, before the beautiful summer weather passed away. I suggested my advertising in the newspapers for such a place as we wanted, to be engaged from year to year, ready furnished; adding, that at a very trifling cost, the nurse could be prevailed on to accompany and attend upon her.

"Come, Eleanor, now, what possible rational objection can you have to all this?" I enquired, finding she listened to my proposal in seriousness and silence.

"Only," she replied, with a sad, sweet smile, "only that it would make me too—too happy." Matters were soon arranged. A respectable solicitor was duly instructed to put her in the proper way of obtaining what was due to her. There was little difficulty in doing so. The solicitor of her uncle when written to, came up to town, acknowledged her right, and recognised her, though he had delicacy enough to abstain from any appearance of surprise, or unnecessary enquiry. There was, consequently, no obstacle on the score of identity; and the property was at once conveyed to her, absolutely. I inserted in the newspapers such an advertisement as I spoke of, and it was answered next day by the proprietor of precisely such a place as I wanted, which, therefore, I at once engaged, on Miss Edwards's behalf, for a year, and made arrangements for her immediate removal thither. Before

quitting the Infirmary, unknown to me, the grateful girl slipped a £50 note—much more than she could afford with comfort—into the poor-box of the institution ; and no remonstrance of mine could make her recall it.

I shall not soon forget the day selected for removing Miss Edwards from the Infirmary ; and I cannot help telling it a little particularly. We had a large glass coach at the dispensary door by eleven o'clock, in which were my wife, and two of my eldest children, to whom I had granted a holiday, for the purpose of accompanying us in this happy little journey—so different, thank God, from a former one ! They, Miss Edwards, and her nurse, filled up the inside, and I rode upon the coach-box. Oh, that happy—that bright, beautiful morning ! That moral harvest-home ! Never did I feel the sun shine so blessedly, the summer breeze so refreshing, or the country more charming ! Again, I say—that happy morning ! Heaven ! then indeed was thy smile upon us, shedding into all our hearts peace and gladness ! That five miles' drive was such an one as I may never have again—it was,

“ When the freshness of heart and of feeling were mine,
As they never again may be ! ”

I wonder what the coachman must have thought of me !—for I could scarcely check the exuberant spirits which animated me.

As for Miss Edwards, I learnt from my wife that she spoke but little all the way. Her feelings could scarce content themselves with the silent tears which perpetually forced themselves into her eyes—the tears of ecstasy. When my wife spoke to her, she often could not answer her.

The cottage was very small, but sweetly situated, at

some little distance from the high-road. Its little white walls peeped from amid honey-suckle and jessamine, like a half-hid pearl glistening between the folds of green velvet.—As my two children trotted on before us with the basket of provisions, and my wife and I followed, with Miss Edwards between us, and the nurse behind, I felt that I was living months of happiness in a few moments of time. My good wife, seeing the difficulty with which Miss Edwards restrained her feelings, woman-like, began to help her fortitude, by bursting into tears, and kissing her. This quite overcame the poor girl. As we neared the cottage, she grew paler and paler—leaned more and more upon our arms—and, as we entered the parlour door, fainted. She soon recovered, however; and gently disengaging herself from my wife and the nurse, sunk upon her knees, elevated her trembling hands towards heaven, looked steadfastly upward, in a silence we all felt too sacred to disturb; and the tears at length flowing freely, relieved a heart overcharged and breaking with gratitude. That was a solemn—a blessed moment; and I am not ashamed to acknowledge, that I felt so overpowered myself with my feelings, that I was compelled to quit the little room abruptly, and recover myself presently in the garden.

Sneer, ye ignorant of the human heart! Laugh, ye who have never known the luxury of being an instrument chosen by Heaven to assist in relieving the wretched, and bringing back the contrite mourner to peace and happiness! smile, ye whose hearts are impervious to the smiles of an approving Providence!—sneer, I say—smile, laugh on—but away from such a scene as this! The ground is holy—oh, profane it not!

My heart is so full with recollections of that happy day, that I could spend pages over it; but I leave the few touches I have given as they are. I add not a stroke to the little picture I have here sketched, in all the humility of conscious imperfection.

We did not quit till about eight o'clock in the evening. Miss Edwards lay on the sofa as we took leave of her, exhausted with the fatigue and excitement of the day.

"Doctor, if you should ever write to me," whispered the poor girl, as I held her hands in mine, "call this—*Magdalen Cottage!*"

We paid her frequent visits in her new residence, and I found her, on each occasion, verifying our most anxious hopes of her permanent recovery. The mild summer—the sweet country air—a mind more at ease, and supported by the consolations of religion—did wonders for her. It was refreshing to one's feelings to be with her! She got worshipped by the few poor in her immediate neighbourhood—for whom she was daily engaged in little offices of unassuming charity—and who spoke of her always as "the good lady at the cottage." She was always dressed in a simple species of half-mourning; and her pale and interesting features looked more so, by contrast with the dark bonnet and veil she wore. I understand that she passed for a widow among the poor, and others that concerned themselves with enquiring after her; and the nurse—now rather her servant—kept up the notion.

I do not wish to represent Miss Edwards as being always, as it were, on the stilts of sentiment, or perpetually in ecstasies—no such thing. She was placid, peace-

ful, humble, contented, pious ; and all this is consistent with a pervading tone of subdued pensiveness, or even occasional sadness. Heart's ease—sweet flower ! is not the less heart's ease, because it may occasionally bloom in the shade !

Three years, nearly, did Miss Edwards reside at Magdalen Cottage, as she touchingly styled it ; her health, though extremely delicate, was on the whole satisfactory. The nurse was a perfect treasure to her. I was almost tired of expressing to her my approbation and thanks. In the beginning of the second winter, however, I regretted deeply to hear from her, that Miss Edwards, in coming from evening service at the church, about a mile off, to which, though the weather was most inclement, she had imprudently ventured—caught a severe cold, which soon revived several slumbering and startling symptoms. She had received, in short, her death-summons. Alas ! alas ! how soon I began to hear of profuse night sweats—of destructive coughing—and all the other fearful train of consumptive symptoms ! Her appearance, too, soon began to tell of the havoc that disease was making with her constitution—already too much shattered to resist even the slightest attacks ! I cannot pain the reader by dwelling on the early progress of her last symptoms. She soon left off her daily walks to the poor, and very soon took to her bed. Disease did indeed stride apace ; and by the malignant intensity of suffering he inflicted, seemed revenging himself for his temporary defeat ! The victim was indeed smitten ; but it lay calmly awaiting the stroke of dismissal. She bore her last affliction with extraordinary meekness and fortitude. I thought she was really

—unaffectedly rejoiced at the prospect of her removal. The poor nurse was infinitely the more distressed of the two : and the most serious reproofs I found necessary, to check the violence of her feelings. I must now, however, content myself with a few hasty entries from my Diary.

Wednesday, January 18th.—I called on Miss Edwards about four o'clock in the afternoon, and found, from the nurse, that she was sitting up in bed, hearing three little girls, daughters of a neighbouring peasant, their catechism. I was remonstrating in the parlour with the nurse for permitting Miss Edwards to act so imprudently, when a little girl came clattering hastily down stairs into the room, with a frightened air, saying, "Come ! come !" I hastened up, and found that my poor patient had fainted in the midst of her pious task ; and the two terror-struck children were standing by in silence, with their hands behind them, staring at the strange paleness and motionlessness of their preceptress. The book had fallen from her hands, and lay beside her on the bed. I sent the children away immediately, and addressed myself to my sweet, suffering, but imprudent patient. When I had succeeded in recovering her from her swoon, the first words she uttered, were, in a faint tone—"Go on, love !" "My dear Eleanor—Eleanor !—it's I,—Doctor ——," said I, gently.

"Well, then, *you* must try it, Mary," she continued after a pause, in the same soft tone.—"Poor lady ! she think's she's got the children—she's not sensible," whispered the nurse in tears. What a lovely expression was there in Miss Edwards's face, blanched and wasted though it was !

"I'm afraid, my dear," she commenced again—her

head still running on the pious duty in which she had been surprised by her swoon—"I'm afraid you've been playing, instead"—"Come, Eleanor," said I, gently.

"No, love, I'm better now! Go on—that's a good girl!" My vinaigrette served at length to dispel the illusion. With a faint start she recovered herself.

"Oh! Doctor ——! How are you? But"—she added, after a pause, "where are the children?"

"They are gone, Eleanor! Really, really, you must not do so again! It is much more than your strength can bear! Forgive me, Eleanor, but I have forbid them to come again," said I, kindly, but peremptorily. She looked at me with a little surprise, and in silence.

"Poor things!" she at length exclaimed, "how little they thought it was the last time!"

The tears came into her eyes.

"Nurse," said she softly, "did you give them the little cakes I told you of?"

The poor woman shook her head in silence.

* * * * *

"How do you feel to-day, Eleanor?" I enquired, feeling her pulse.

"Very, very weak; but so happy! I am sorry I heard the children, if you thought I did wrong—but"—her face brightened, "He that loved little children seemed with me!"

"My dear Eleanor, I don't wish to hurt your feelings, but you miscalculate your strength! Indeed you don't know how weak you are! Now promise me not to do so again!"

"I will, dear Doctor, I will! For my flesh is weak! But how is Mrs ——?" (my wife.)

"She is well, and sends her love to you. I have brought with me some calves'-foot jelly; she made it herself for you, and hopes you will relish it."

"She's *very* good to me—very," sobbed the poor girl. "I'll try to take a little this evening. But—I shall not want it long, Doctor," she added, with a sad smile; "I am going, I hope—to heaven!"

She paused. I spoke not.

"If," she resumed, "such a poor guilty thing as I shall be permitted to do so—dear Doctor—I will—I will always watch over you and your"—

Her emotions were becoming too violent, and I thought it best to take my leave, promising to be with her the next day. Alas, I saw her sweet sad spirit was not long to be excluded from that blessed place, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!"

January 19th to the 24th inclusive.—During this interval Miss Edwards declined rapidly; but her sufferings never once seemed to shake her firm confidence in the mercy of God. She was occasionally elevated, partly through hysteric excitement, to a pitch of inspiration; and uttered such eloquence as I have seldom heard from female lips. The clergyman of the parish administered to her the sacrament once or twice, and it was consolatory, he said, to see the spirit in which she received it.

On one day during this interval, my wife (herself indisposed) accompanied me to Miss Edwards's bedside; and the poor, fond, grateful girl's feelings got quite uncontrollable. I was obliged to remove my wife, much excited, from the room; and I fear the shock of that interview—which I afterwards blamed myself much for allow-

ing—hurried Miss Edwards more rapidly to her end. On one of the days in question, she calmly arranged her little property ; leaving the interest of £1000 to the nurse for her life ; £200 to the poor of the parish ; a trifle to me and my wife, “ for rings—if they will wear them ; ” and the rest to the Magdalen Hospital, on condition that it was given anonymously, and no attempt made to discover from what quarter it proceeded beyond me. I put the whole into the hands of my solicitor, and he got her will duly drawn and executed.

Wednesday, January 25th.—Miss Edwards was sweetly calm and composed on this visit. She spoke to me of her funeral, begging it might be in the simplest way possible—followed by the nurse, three poor women, to whom she bequeathed black dresses for that purpose—and, “ if I would honour her poor unworthy dust,” by myself ; that there should be no name, no plate upon the coffin-lid, and no grave-stone in the churchyard. She repeatedly and solemnly enjoined me to observe her wishes in this respect.

“ Let me not leave my stained name behind me ! No one would feel pleasure in seeing it—but, I believe—I humbly hope, it is written in the Books of Forgiveness above ! Let me go gently, and in silence, into my mother Earth, and be thankful for so peaceful a resting-place ! ” The tone in which she uttered this echoes yet in my ear !

“ I am happy, Eleanor,” said I, much affected—“ I am *very* happy to see you so composed in the prospect of death ! Rely upon it, Heaven is very near you.”

“ Yes—the Friend of Publicans and Sinners—I think he will not refuse to receive me ! ” she replied, the tears dropping from her eyes.

"How bright—how clear is all before you!"

In a solemn, slow whisper, she looked upwards with an air of awful confidence in the truth of what she was saying, and quoted the sublime language of Scripture. "I know that my Redeemer liveth—and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!"

"Amen, Eleanor!" I exclaimed, taking her hand in mine—"we may meet again," said I, but paused abruptly; I felt choked.

"Oh, Doctor, yes!" she replied, with thrilling emphasis, gently compressing my hand. "You must not, Doctor, when I am gone, quite forget me! Sometimes, Doctor, think of the poor girl you saved from ruin—and believe she loved you!" Our tears fell fast. I could not open my lips. "I know I am not worthy to be in your thoughts—but, dear Doctor! *you* will be among the last thoughts in my heart! Will you—promise that you will sometimes remember poor Eleanor!"

Almost blinded by my tears—unable to utter a word—I bent over her and kissed her forehead. "God bless thee, Eleanor," I faltered. She spoke not, but shook her head with unutterable emotion. I could bear it no longer; so I faltered that she should see me again within a few hours; and left the room. I had ridden half way home before I could recover my self possession. Every time that the pale image of Eleanor B—— came before me, it forced the tears afresh into my eyes, and half determined me to return instantly to her bedside, and continue there till she died.

Thursday, January 26th.—As I hurried up, about

twelve o'clock, to the cottage, I saw an elderly woman, a stranger, in the act of closing the parlour shutters. Then my sweet patient was gone! I stepped into the parlour.

"She is dead, I suppose?" I enquired, with a faltering voice.

"Ah, poor, good lady, she *is* gone! She's hardly been dead five minutes, though! Poor nurse is in a sad way about it."

At that moment the nurse came down stairs, wringing her hands and crying bitterly. "Oh—poor Miss Eleanor—I have lost you! I shall never have such a good mistress again,"—and she cried as though her heart were breaking.

"I hope she died easily?" I enquired, when she had grown calmer.

"Yes—yes, sir! She had been going fast ever since you left yesterday, though she tried, poor, dear thing!—but it was of no use—to go on with something for you which she had long been about—and—she died with it in her hands!"

Without uttering a word more, I went up into the bedroom. I cannot describe the peculiar feelings of awe with which I am struck on seeing a very recent corpse—before it has been touched—before any thing has been stirred or altered in the room about it. How forcibly I felt them on the present occasion!

"Did she say any thing before she died?" I enquired of the nurse, as we stood watching the remains.

"She sighed—and said softly—'Kiss me, nurse!—I'm leaving you!'—and died in a few minutes after, as if she was falling asleep!" replied the nurse.

She lay on her left side, her black hair half-concealing her face; and in her hand was a sampler, which she had been working at, I found, frequently during her illness, with a view of having it given to me after her death—and which was not yet finished. I gently disengaged it from her insensible grasp—and let the reader imagine my feelings, on seeing nothing but the letters—

“ MARY MAGDALEN—

E——”

The other letter of her initials—“ B.”—the finger of death had prevented her adding.

I shall never part with that sampler till I die!—Oh, poor Mary Magdalen!—I will not forget thee!

CHAPTER III.

THE BARONET'S BRIDE.

NEVER was man married under more auspicious circumstances than Sir Henry Harleigh. He the descendant of an ancient house, and the accomplished possessor of a splendid fortune ; his bride the fairest flower in the family of a distinguished nobleman ; surely here were elements of high happiness, warranting the congratulations of the "troops of friends" who, by their presence, added *eclat* to the imposing nuptials. "Heaven bless thee, sweet Anne !" sobbed the venerable peer, her father, folding his daughter in his arms, as Sir Henry advanced to conduct her to his travelling-chariot ; "may these be the last tears thou wilt have occasion to shed !" The blushing, trembling girl could make no reply ; and linking her arm in that of her handsome husband, dizzy with agitation, and almost insensible of the many hands that shook hers in passing, suffered him to lead her through the throng of guests above, and lines of be-favoured lackeys below, to the chariot waiting to conduct "the happy pair" to a romantic residence of Sir Henry's in Wales. The moment they were seated, the steps were shut up—the door closed.

Sir Henry hastily waved a final adieu to the company thronging the windows of the drawing-room he had just quitted; the postilions cracked their whips, and away dashed the chariot-and-four, amidst the cheery pealing of the bells—

——“bearing its precious throbbing charge
To halcyon climes afar.”

Sir Henry's character contrasted strongly, in some respects, with that of his lady. His urbanity was tintured with a certain reserve, or rather melancholy, which some considered the effect of an early and severe devotion to study; others, and perhaps more truly, a constitutional tendency inherited from his mother. There was much subdued energy in his character; and you could not fail, under all his calmness of demeanour, to observe the struggles of talent and ambition. Lady Anne, on the contrary, was all sprightliness and frolic. It was like a sunbeam and a cloud brought together; the one, in short, “*L'Allegro* ;” the other, “*Il Penseroso*.” The qualities of each were calculated to attemper those of the other, alternately mitigating and brightening; and who would not predicate a happy harmonious union of *such* extremes?

Six months after their marriage, the still “happy couple” returned to town, after having traversed an extensive portion of the Continent. Lady Anne looked lovelier, and her spirits were more buoyant and brilliant than ever. She had apparently transfused not a little of her vivacity into her husband's more tranquil temperament: his manners exhibited a briskness and joyousness which none of his friends had ever witnessed in him before. During the whole of the London “season,” Lady Anne revelled in enjoyment; the idol of her husband—the centre of gaiety

and cheerfulness—the star of fashion. Her *debut* at Court was one of the most flattering of the day. It was generally talked of, that the languid elegance, the listless fastidiousness of royalty, had been quickened into something like an appearance of interest, as the fair bride bowed before it, in the graceful attitude of loyal duty. Once or twice I had the satisfaction of meeting with her ladyship in public—all charming vivacity—all sparkle—followed by crowds of flatterers—till one would have thought her nearly intoxicated with their fragrant incense! “What a sweet smile!”—“How passing graceful!”—“What a swan-like neck!”—“Ah! happy fellow that Harleigh!”—“Seen Lady Anne? Oh! yonder she moves—there—that laughing lady in white satin, tapping the French Ambassador on the shoulder with her fan.”—“What! Is *that* Lady Anne, now waltzing with Lord —? What a superb foot and ancle! What a sylph it is!” Such was the ball-room tittle-tattle that ever accompanied Sir Henry and his lady, in passing through the mazes of a London season; and I doubt not the reader would have joined in it, could he have seen Lady Anne! Should I attempt to present her bodily before him, *he* would suspect me of culling the hyperboles of the novelist, while *I* should feel that after all I had failed. He should have seen for himself the light of passion—of feeling and thought—that shone in her blue eyes—the beauteous serenity that reigned in her aristocratic brow—“in all her gestures, dignity and love!” There is a picture of a young lady by Sir Joshua Reynolds that has been sworn to by many as the image of Lady Anne; and it is one worthy of that great artist’s pencil. Not the least characteristic trait about her, was the *naïveté* with which she acknow-

ledged her love of Sir Henry, displaying it on all occasions by

“ Looks of reverent fondness,”

that disdained concealment. And so indeed was it with the Baronet. Each was the other's pride and contentment ; and both were the envy of society. Ah, who could look upon them, and believe that so dark a day was to come ! But I will not anticipate.

In due time Sir Henry completed the extensive arrangements for his town residence ; and by the beginning of the ensuing winter, Lady Anne found herself at the head of as splendid an establishment as her heart could desire. The obsequious morning prints soon teemed with accounts of *his* dinners ; and of the balls, routs, *soirées*, and *conversaziones* given by this new “ queen of the evening hour.” Sir Henry, who represented his county in Parliament, and consequently had many calls upon his time—for he was rather disposed to be a “ working ” member—let his lady have it all her own way. He mingled but little in her gaieties ; and when he did, it was evident that his thoughts were elsewhere—that he rather tolerated than enjoyed them. He soon settled into the habitudes of the man of *political* fashion, seldom deviating from the track, with all its absorbing associations, bounded by the House and the Clubs ;—those sunk-rocks of many a woman's domestic happiness ! In short, Sir Henry—man of fashion as he was—was somewhat of a character, and was given ample credit for sporting “ the eccentric.” His manners were marked by a dignity that often froze into hauteur, and sometimes degenerated into almost surly abruptness ; which, however, was easily carried to the account of severe political application and abstraction.

Towards his beautiful wife, however, he preserved a demeanour of uniform tenderness. She could not form a wish that he did not even personally endeavour to secure her the means of gratifying. Considering the number and importance of his public engagements, many wondered that he could contrive to be so often seen accompanying her in rides and drives about the Park and elsewhere ; but who could name

“ The sacrifice affection would not yield ! ”

Some there were, however, who ere long imagined they detected a moodiness—an irritability—a restlessness—of which his political engagements appeared hardly to afford a sufficient explanation. They spoke of his sudden fits of absence, and the agitation he displayed on being startled from them. What could there be to disturb him ? was he running beyond his income to supply his lady's extravagance ? was he offended at any lightness or indiscretion of which she might have been guilty ? had he given credence to any of the hundred tales circulated in society of every woman eminent in the *haut ton* ? was he embarrassed with the consequences of some deep political move ? No one could tell ; but many marked the increasing indications of his dissatisfaction and depression. Observation soon fastened her keen eyes upon Lady Anne, and detected occasional clouds upon her generally joyous countenance. Her bright eye was often laden with anxiety ; the colour of her cheek varied ; the blandness and cheerfulness of her manner gave place to frequent abruptness, petulance, and absence ; symptoms these which soon set her friends sympathizing, and her acquaintance spe-

culating. Whenever this sort of enquiry is aroused, charity falls asleep. She never seemed at ease, it was said, in her husband's presence—his departure seemed the signal for her returning gaiety. Strange to say, each seemed the conscious source of the other's anxiety and apprehension. Each had been detected casting furtive glances at the other—tracking one another's motions, and listening, even, to one another's conversation; and some went so far as to assert that each had been observed on such occasions to turn suddenly pale. What could be the matter? Every body wondered—no one knew. Some attributed their changed deportment to the exhaustion consequent upon late hours and excitement; a few hinted the probability of a family; many whispered that Sir Henry—some that Lady Anne—gambled. Others, again, insinuated that each had too good cause to be dissatisfied with the other's fidelity. When, however, it got currently reported that a letter was one evening given to Sir Henry at his club, which blanched his face and shook his hand as he read it—that his whole manner was disturbed for days after, and that he even absented himself from a grand debate in the House—an occasion on which he was specially pledged to support his party—curiosity was at once heightened and bewildered. Then, again, it was undeniable that they generally treated one another with the utmost tenderness—*really*—unequivocally. Lady Anne, however, daily exhibited symptoms of increasing disquietude; the lustre faded from her eye, the colour from her cheek—her vivacity totally disappeared—she no longer even affected it. “How thin she gets!” was an exclamation heard on all hands. They were seen less frequently in

society; and even when they did enter into it, it was evidently an intolerable burden. Sighs were heard to escape from Lady Anne; her eyes were seen occasionally filled with tears; and it was noticed, that, on observing Sir Henry watching her—which was often the case—she made violent efforts to recover her composure. Thus in tears one evening, curiosity was strained to the utmost when Sir Henry approached her, rather stiffly bowed away the gentleman who was proposing to dance with her, drew her arm within his, and, with some trepidation of manner, quitted the room. “Good heaven! what *can* be behind the scenes?” thought fifty different people who had witnessed this last exhibition.

“Afraid they lead a woful life together,” said one. “I never thought they would suit one another,” was the reply.

“’Pon my soul,” simpered a sickly scion of nobility, “’tis an odd thing to say—but—but—gad, I do believe I can explain it all! Harleigh, I know, hates to see her dance with *me*—whew!”

“Haven’t you seen her turn pale, and seem quite sick at heart, when she has noticed him talking to Miss ——?” wheezed an old dowager, whose daughter had attempted to join in the race for the Baronet’s hand? These, and a thousand others, were questions, hints, and innuendoes bandied about every where during the remainder of the season: soon after the close of which, Lady Anne brought her husband a “son and heir;” and as soon as circumstances would permit, the whole establishment was ordered out of town—and Sir Henry and his lady set off no one knew whither. It was presently discovered, however, that they were spending the sum-

mer in a sequestered part of Switzerland. At an advanced period of the autumn they returned to London; and the little that was seen of them in society, served to show that their continental sojourn had worked little or no change in either—save that Lady Anne, since her accouchement, seemed to have become far more delicate in health than usual under similar circumstances. Rumour and speculation were suddenly revived by an extraordinary move of Sir Henry's—he broke up, at a moment's warning, his extensive town establishment, and withdrew to a beautiful mansion about ten or twelve miles distant from the metropolis. Strange as was such a step, it had the effect, probably contemplated by the Baronet, of quieting curiosity, as soon as the hubbub occasioned by the removal of its cause, had ceased. In the vortex of London pleasure and dissipation, who can think of objects no longer present to provoke notice and enquiry? One thing was obvious—that Lady Anne's family either were, or affected to be, in the dark about the source of her disquietude. The old peer, whose health was rapidly declining, had removed to his native air, in a remote part of Ireland. Several of his daughters, fine fashionable women, continued in town. It was whispered that their visits to Sir Henry's new residence had been coldly discouraged; and thus, if secrecy and seclusion were the objects aimed at by the Baronet, he apparently succeeded in attaining them.

I may observe, that during the period above referred to, several enquiries had been made of *me* concerning the topics in question, by my patients, and others—who supposed that a former professional acquaintance with the Baronet, slight though it was, gave me some initiation

into the mysteries of his conduct. Such, I need hardly say, were queries I was utterly unable to answer. Sir Henry, though a polite, was at all times a distant, uncommunicative man; and had he even been otherwise, we came but seldom into personal contact since his marriage. I therefore shared, instead of satisfying, the prevalent curiosity respecting his movements.

It was late in the evening of the 25th of April, 181—, that a letter was put into my hands, bearing on the envelope the words "Private and confidential." The frank was by Sir Henry Harleigh, and the letter, which also was from him, ran thus. Let the reader imagine my astonishment on perusing it!—

"Dear Doctor ——. My travelling carriage-and-four will be at your door to-morrow morning between nine and ten o'clock, for the purpose of conveying you down to my house, about ten miles from town—where your services are required. Let me implore you not to permit any engagement—short of life or death—to stand in the way of your coming at the time, and in the mode I have presumed to point out. Your presence—believe me!—is required on matters of special urgency,—and—you will permit me to add—of *special confidence*. I may state, in a word, that the sole object of your visit is Lady Anne. I shall, if possible, and you are punctual, meet you on the road, in order that you may be in some measure prepared for the duties that will await you I am, &c. &c.,

HENRY HARLEIGH.

"P.S.—Pray forgive me, if I say I have opened my letter for the sake of entreating you not to apprise *any body* of the circumstance of my sending for you."

This communication threw me into a maze of conjectures. I apprehended that the ensuing morning would introduce me to some scene of distress—and my imagination could suggest only family discord as the occasion. I soon made the requisite arrangements; and when the morning came, without having shown my wife the Baronet's letter, or giving her any clue to my destination, jumped into the pea-green chariot-and-four the instant that it drew up at my door—and was presently whirled out of town at the rate of twelve miles an hour. I observed that the panels of the carriage had neither crest nor supporters; and the colour was not that of the Baronet's. I did not meet the Baronet, as his letter led me to expect. On reaching the park gates, which stood open, the groom behind leaped down the instant that the reeking horses could be stopped, opened the carriage-door, and with a respectful bow informed me that the Baronet begged I would alight at the gates. Of course I acquiesced, and walked up the avenue to the house, full of amazement at the apparent mystery which was thrown about my movement. I ascended the spreading steps which led to the hall-door, and even pushed it open without encountering any one. On ringing the bell, however, an elderly and not very neatly dressed female made her appearance—and asked me, with a respectful curtsy, whether my name was "Dr ——." On being answered in the affirmative, she said that Sir Henry was waiting for me in a room adjoining, and immediately led the way to it. I thought it singular enough that no male domestic should have hitherto made his appearance,—knowing that in town Sir Henry kept an unusually large retinue of such gentry. I thought, also, that I

perceived something unusual, not only in the countenance and manner of the female who had answered my summons, but of the groom who attended me from town. I was soon, however, in the presence of the Baronet. The room was spacious and lofty, and furnished in a style of splendid elegance. Several busts, statues, and valuable paintings, graced the corners and sides, together with a noble library containing, I should think, several thousand volumes. Before I had had time to cast more than a cursory glance around me, Sir Henry issued from a door at the further extremity of the library, and advancing hastily to me, shook me by the hand with cordiality. He wore a flowered green velvet dressing-gown, and his shirt-collars were open. I thought I had never seen a finer figure, or a more expressive countenance—the latter, however, clouded with mingled sternness and anxiety.

“Doctor ——,” said he, conducting me to a seat, “I feel greatly obliged by this prompt attention to my wishes—which, however, I fear must have inconvenienced you. We are at breakfast. Have *you* breakfasted?”

“Yes—but my drive has sharpened my appetite afresh—I think I could not resist a cup of chocolate or coffee.”

“Ah—good! I’m happy to hear it. Perhaps, then, you will permit me to take a turn round the garden—and then we will join Lady Anne in the breakfast-room?”—I assented. There was something flurried in his manner and peremptory in his tone—I saw there was something that agitated him, and waited for the *denouement* with interest. In a moment or two, we were walking together in the garden, which we had entered through a glass door.

“ Doctor,” said Sir Henry, in a low tone, “ I have sent for you on a most melancholy errand to-day ”—he seemed agitated, and paused—proceeding, “ I have infinite satisfaction in being able to avail myself of your services—for I know that you are both kind and experienced—as well as—confidential ? ” Again he paused, and looked full at me,—I bowed, and he resumed.

“ Possibly you may have occasionally heard surmises about Lady Anne and myself?—I believe we have occasioned no little speculation latterly ! ”—I smiled, and bowed off his enquiry. “ I am conscious that there has been some ground for it ”—he continued, with a sigh—“ and I now find the time is arrived when all must be known—I must explain it all to you.—You have, I believe, occasionally met us in society, and recollect her ladyship ? ”

“ Several times, Sir Henry—and I have a distinct recollection of her.—Indeed ”——

“ Did it ever strike you that there was any thing remarkable either in her countenance or deportment ? ”

I looked, at a loss to understand him.

“ I—I mean—did you ever observe a certain peculiarity of expression in her features ? ” he continued, earnestly.

“ Why—let me see—I have certainly observed her exhibit languor and lassitude—her cheek has been pale, and her countenance now and then saddened with anxiety. I supposed, however, there was no unusual mode of accounting for it, Sir Henry ”—I added, with a smile. The Baronet’s face was clouded for a moment, as if with displeasure and anxiety.

“ Ah ”—he replied, hastily—“ I see—I understand you—but you are quite mistaken—totally so. Pray, is that the general supposition ? ”

"Why—I am not aware of its being expressed in so many words; but it was one that struck *me* immediately—as a matter of course." As I was speaking, I observed Sir Henry changing colour.

"Doctor ——," said he, in a low agitated voice, grasping my arm as if with involuntary energy—"We have no time to lose. One word—alas, *one* word—will explain all. It is horrible torture to me—but I can conceal it no longer. You must be told the truth at once. Lady Anne is—*insane*!" He rather gasped than spoke the last word. He stood suddenly still, and covered his face with his hands. He shook with agitation. Neither of us spoke for a moment or two—except that I almost unconsciously echoed the last word he uttered. "Insane!—Why, I can scarcely believe my ears, Sir Henry. Do you use the last word in its literal—its medical sense?"

"Yes, I do!—I mean that my wife is mad—Yes! with a madwoman you are asked to sit down to breakfast. I can assure you, Doctor ——, that the anguish I have latterly endured on this horrid account has nearly driven me to the same condition! Oh God, what a dreadful life has been mine for this last year or two, as I have seen this tremendous calamity gradually befalling me"——

I implored him to restrain his feelings.

"Yes—you are right," said he, after a pause, in which he tried to master his emotion—"I have recovered myself. Let us repair to the breakfast-room. For Heaven's sake, appear—if you can—as though nothing had transpired between us. Make any imaginable excuse you please for coming hither. Say you were called in by me, on my own account—for—for—any complaint you choose to mention. It will be for you to watch my poor Lady

Anne with profound attention—but, of course, not obviously. I shall take an opportunity, as if by chance, of leaving you alone with her. Afterwards, we will concert the steps necessary in this dreadful emergency. By the way—you must not expect to see any thing wild or extravagant in her manner. She will not appear even eccentric—for she is very guarded before strangers. Hush!” said he, shaking, and turning round palely—“did you hear—no, it was a mistake!—Alas, how nervous I am become!—I have perfect control over her—but watch her eye—her mouth—her *eye*”—he shuddered—“and you will know all! Now, Doctor, for mercy’s sake, don’t commit yourself—or me!” he whispered, as we regained the room we had quitted. He paused for a moment, as if to expend a heavy sigh,—and then, opening the door through which he had originally entered to receive me, ushered me into the breakfast-room. Lady Anne—beautiful creature—in a white morning-dress, sat beside the silver urn, apparently reading the newspaper. She seemed surprised at seeing me, and bowed politely when Sir Henry mentioned my name, without moving from her seat. Her cheek was very pale—and there was an expression of deep anxiety—or rather apprehension—in her eye, which glanced rapidly from me to Sir Henry, and from him to me. With all his efforts, Sir Henry could not appear calm—his cheek was flushed—his hand unsteady—his voice thick—his manner flurried.

“Are not you well, Sir Henry?” enquired his lady, looking earnestly at him.

“Never better, love!” he replied, with an effort at smiling.

“I fear I have disturbed your ladyship in reading the

Morning Post," said I, interrupting an embarrassed pause.

"Oh, not at all, sir—not the least. There is nothing in it of any interest," she replied, with a faint sigh; "I was only looking, Henry, over a silly account of the Duchess of ——'s fête. Do you take breakfast?" addressing me.

"A single cup of tea, and a slice of this tongue, are all I shall trouble your ladyship for. Talking, by the way, of fêtes," I added, carelessly, "it is whispered in the world that your ladyship had taken the veil—or—or—died—in short, we are all wondering what has become of your ladyship—that is, of *both* of you!"

"Ah!" said the Baronet with affected eagerness, "I suppose, by the way, we come in for our share of hint and innuendo! Pray, what is the latest coinage, Doctor, from the mint of scandal and tittle-tattle?"

Lady Anne's hand trembled as she handed me the cup of tea I had asked for—and her eye settled apprehensively on that of her husband. "Why, the general impression is, that you are playing misanthrope, in consequence of some political pique." Sir Henry laughed feebly. "And your ladyship, too, turns absentee! I fear you are not in the health—the brilliant spirits—which used to charm the world."

"Indeed, Doctor, I am not! I am one of the many victims"——

"Of ennui," interrupted the Baronet, quickly, fixing an imperative eye upon his lady, I saw with what nervous apprehension, lest she should afford even the desired corroboration of what he had told me in the garden.

"Yes, yes, ennui," she replied, timidly, adding, with a sigh, "I wonder the world remembers us so long."

"I have a note to write, Doctor," said the Baronet, suddenly, after the lapse of about five or ten minutes, treading at the same time gently on my foot, "which I intend to beg you will carry up to town for me. Will you excuse me for a few moments?" I bowed. "Lady Anne, I dare say, will entertain you from the Morning Post—ha! ha!"

She smiled faintly. I observed Sir Henry's eye fixed upon her, as he shut the door, with an expression of agonizing apprehension. The reader may imagine the peculiar feelings of embarrassment with which I found myself at length alone with Lady Anne. Being ignorant of the degree or species of her mental infirmity, I felt much at a loss how to shape my conversation. As far as one could judge from appearances, she was as perfectly sane as I considered myself. I could detect no wildness of the eye—no incoherence of language—no eccentricity of deportment—nothing but an air of languor and anxiety.

"Sir Henry is looking well," said I, as he closed the door.

"Yes—he always looks well; even if he were ill, he would not *look* so."

"I wish I could sincerely compliment your ladyship on your looks," I continued, eyeing her keenly.

"Certainly, I *have* been better than I am at present," she replied with a sigh—"What I have to complain of, however, is not so much bodily ailing as lowness of spirits."

"Your ladyship is not the first on whom a sudden seclusion from society has had similar effects. Then why not return to town—at least for a season?"

"There are—reasons—why I should at present prefer to continue in retirement," she replied, dropping her eyes to avoid the steadfast look with which I regarded them.

"*Reasons!* permit me to ask your ladyship the import of such mysterious terms?" I enquired, with gentle earnestness, drawing my chair nearer to her, believing that the ice was at length broken.

"I am not aware, Doctor," said she, coldly, and with an air of rather haughty surprise, "that I said any thing that could be called *mysterious*."

"Pardon, pardon me, my lady! I was only anxious lest you might have any secret source of anxiety preying on your mind, and from which I might have the power of relieving you. Permit me to say, how deeply grieved I am to see your ladyship's altered looks. I need not disguise the fact that Sir Henry is exceedingly anxious on your account"—

"What! what! Sir Henry anxious—on my account!" she repeated, with an air of astonishment; "why, can it then be possible that *I* am the object of your present visit, Dr —?"

I paused for a moment. Why should I conceal or deny the fact, thought I.

"Your Ladyship guesses aright. Sir Henry's anxieties have brought me hither this morning. He wishes me to ascertain whether your ladyship labours under indisposition of any kind."

"And pray, Doctor," continued her ladyship, turning pale as she spoke, "what does he imagine my complaint to be? Did he mention any particular symptoms?"

"Indeed he did—lassitude—loss of appetite—lowness of spirits."

She raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which, glistening with tears, she presently directed to the window, as if she dreaded to encounter mine. Her lips quivered with emotion.

"Dear lady, for Heaven's sake, be calm! Why should you distress yourself?" said I, gently placing my fingers upon her wrist, at which she started, withdrew her hand, looked me rather wildly full in the face, and bursting into tears, wept for some moments in silence.

"Oh, Doctor——!" at length she sobbed, in hesitating, passionate accents—"you cannot—you cannot imagine how very ill I am—*here*," placing her hand upon her heart. "I am a wretched, a miserable woman! There never lived a more unfortunate being! I shall never, never be happy again," she continued vehemently.

"Come, come, your ladyship must make a confidant of me! What, in Heaven's name, can be the meaning of all this emotion? No one, sure, can have used you ill? Come, tell me all about it!"

"Oh, I cannot—I dare not! It is a painful secret to keep, but it would be dreadful to tell it. Have you *really* no idea of it? Has it not, then, been openly whispered about in the world?" she enquired eagerly, with much wildness in her manner.

Alas, poor Lady Anne! I had seen and heard enough to satisfy me that her state corroborated the fears expressed by Sir Henry, whose return at that moment, with a sealed note in his hand, put an end to our melancholy *tête-à-tête*. He cast a sudden keen glance of scrutiny at his lady and me, and then went up to her and kissed her tenderly, without speaking. What wretchedness was in his features at that moment! I saw by his manner, that he desired me

to rise and take my leave; and, after a few words on indifferent subjects, I rose, bowed to her ladyship, and, accompanied by the Baronet, withdrew.

"Well, am I right or wrong, Doctor, in my terrible suspicions?" enquired the Baronet, his manner much disturbed, and trembling from head to foot, as we stood together in the large bow-window of his library. I sighed, and shook my head.

"Did she make any allusions to the present arrangement I have been obliged to adopt in the house?"

I told him the substance of what had passed between us. He sighed profoundly, and covered his eyes for a moment with his hands.

"Is her Ladyship ever violent?" I enquired.

"No—seldom—never, never! I wish she were! Any thing—any thing to dissipate the horrid monotony of melancholy madness—but I cannot bear to talk on the subject. I can scarcely control my feelings!" He turned from me, and stood looking through the window, evidently overpowered with grief. For a minute or two neither of us spoke.

"The dreadful subject *forces* itself upon us," said he, suddenly turning again towards me—"Doctor, what, in Heaven's name—what is to be done in this tremendous emergency? Let our first care be to prevent exposure. I suppose—a temporary seclusion, I am afraid, will be necessary?" he added, looking gloomily at me. I told him I feared such a course would certainly be advisable, if not even necessary, and assured him that he need be under no apprehension on that score, for there were many admirable retreats for such patients as his unfortunate lady—where privacy, comfort, amusement, and skilful

surveillance, were combined. I told him not to despond of his lady's early restoration to society.

"Oh, Doctor!"—he groaned, clasping his hands vehemently together—"the maddening thought that my sweet, my darling wife, must be banished from my bosom—from her home—from her child—and become the inmate of—of—a"—— He ceased abruptly. A wild smile shot across his features.

"Doctor," said he, lowering his tone to a faint whisper, "can I trust you with a secret? I know I am acting imprudently—unnecessarily disclosing it—but I know it will be safe with *you*!"

I bowed, and listened in breathless wonder * * * My flesh crept from head to foot as he went on. I had been all along the dupe of a MADMAN. His eye was fixed upon me with a devilish expression. The shock deprived me of utterance—for a while almost of sight and hearing. I was startled back into consciousness, by a loud laugh uttered by the Baronet. He was pointing at me, with his arm and finger extended, almost touching my face, with an air of derision. The dreadful truth flashed all at once upon my mind. I could now understand the illness—the melancholy of Lady Anne—whose blanched countenance, looking through the half-opened door, caught my eye at that moment, as I happened to turn in the direction of the breakfast-room. I trembled lest the madman should also see her, and burst into violence!

The "secret" of the Baronet consisted in his alleged discovery of a mode of converting *tallow into wax*: That it would, when carried into effect, produce him a revenue of fifty thousand a-year: That because the king could

not prevail upon him to disclose it, he had sent spies to watch all his movements, and had threatened to arrest him for high treason ! All this horrid nonsense he told me in a low, serious, energetic tone of voice and manner ; and though my countenance must have turned deadly pale when the shocking discovery first broke upon me, and my violent agitation become apparent, Sir Henry did not seem to notice it. I know not what called forth the laugh I have mentioned, unless it was the delight he experienced from the success with which he imposed upon me so long.

"But, Doctor," he continued, "I have not disclosed this great secret to you for nothing. I set about discovering it in consequence of an alarming accident which has happened to me, and of which both you and the world will ere long hear much. It became necessary, in a word, that I should develope a new source of independence, and, thank Heaven, at length it is found ! But the mere *money* it will produce is the least consideration—there are grander results to follow—but of them anon. You, Doctor, are a scientific man—I am but superficially so ; and that is a species of knowledge essential to the successful use of my great discovery. We must therefore become *partners*—eh ?" I bowed. "The terms, you know, we can arrange afterwards. Ah, ha, ha ! what will my constituents—what will my political friends—say to this ? Sir Henry Harleigh turned wax-maker !—Why, Doctor, why are you so silent ? Chopfallen, eh ? and why ?"

I had been pondering all the while on the proper course to follow under such extraordinary and melancholy circumstances, and therefore permitted him to ramble on as

he pleased.—“Calculating the profits, eh?—Well—but we must go through a good deal before we get to that part of the story, believe me! First and foremost,” his countenance fell, and he cast a disturbed glance at the breakfast-room door, “we must make some decisive arrangements about poor Lady Anne. She knows my secret, and it is the thoughts of it that have turned her head—(women, you know, cannot bear sudden fortune!)—but, oh! such a gentle madness is hers!” He uttered this last exclamation in a tone that touched my heart to the quick; melting, moving, soul-subduing was it, as some of the whispers of Kean in *Othello*!

“Doctor,” he commenced abruptly, after a pause, let me consider of it for a moment—a thought suggests itself—I would not have her feelings wounded for worlds!—I’ll consider of it—and presently tell you my determination.”—He folded his arms on his breast, and walked slowly up and down the library, as if engaged in profound contemplation, and so continued for five or ten minutes, as if he had utterly forgotten me, who stood leaning against the window-frame, watching him with unutterable feelings. What should I do? It was next to impossible for me to have another interview with Lady Anne before leaving. I thought it on the whole advisable not to alarm his suspicions by any such attempt, but to take my departure as quietly and quickly as possible; determined, on reaching London, to communicate immediately with Mr Courthrope, his brother-in-law, with whom I had some little acquaintance, and with him suggest such measures as were necessary to secure the safety, not only of the Baronet, but his wretched lady. This resolution formed, I felt anxious to be gone. As the poor Baronet’s

cogitations, however, seemed far from approaching a close I found it necessary to interrupt him.

"Well, Sir Henry," said I, moving from the window-recess, "I must leave you, for I have many engagements in town."

"Do you know, now," said he, with a puzzled air, "I positively cannot remember what it was I had to think about! How very absurd! *What* was it, now?" standing still, and corrugating his brows.

"Oh," said I, "it was whether it would be proper for me to see Lady Anne before I left"——"Ah," he interrupted briskly, "ay, so it was—I recollect—why—see Lady Anne?—No—I think not," he replied, with an abrupt, peculiar tone and manner, as if displeased with the proposal. "I will accompany you to the road, where you will find the carriage in readiness to take you back to town." He at the same time took from a pocket-book in his bosom pocket a note-case, and gave me a check, by way of fee, of £500!

"By the way," said he, abruptly, as arm-in-arm we walked down to the park gates, "what, after all, are we to do with Lady Anne? How strange that we should have forgotten her! Well, what step do you intend taking next?"—I sighed.

"I must turn it over carefully in my mind, before I commit myself."

"Ah, Sallust!—*Priusquam incipias—consulto; sed ubi consulueris—sed ubi consulueris*, Doctor——"

"*Maturè facto opus sit*, Sir Henry," I replied, humouring his recollection.

"Good. There never was any thing more curt and

pretty." He repeated the sentence. "Well, and *what* will you do?"

"I cannot precisely say at present; but you may rely upon seeing me here again this evening. I hope you will conceal it from Lady Anne, however, or it may alarm her."

"Mind me, Doctor," said he abruptly, his features clouding over with a strange expression. "I—I—will have no violence used."

"Violence! my dear Sir Henry! violence! God forbid!" I exclaimed, with unaffected amazement.

"Of course, Doctor, I hold you *personally*," laying a strenuous emphasis on the last word, "I hold you *personally* responsible for whatever measures may be adopted. Here, however, is the carriage. I shall await your return with anxiety." I shook him by the hand, and stepped into the chariot.

"Good morning—good morning, Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, as the postilions were preparing to start. He put in his head at the window, and in a hurried tone whispered,—“On second thoughts, Dr ———, I shall decline any further interference in the matter—at least to-day.” He had scarcely uttered the last words, when the chariot drove off.

"Hollo! hark ye, fellow! stop! stop!" shouted the Baronet, at the top of his voice, "stop, or I'll *fire*!" The postilions, who, I observed, had set off at pretty near a gallop, seemed disposed to continue it; but on hearing the last alarming words, instantaneously drew up. I looked with amazement through the window, and beheld Sir Henry hurrying towards us—fury in his features, and a pocket-pistol in his extended right hand.

"Good God, Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, terror-struck, "what can be the meaning of this extraordinary conduct?"

"A word in your ear, Doctor," he panted, coming close up to the carriage door.

"Speak, for Heaven's sake, speak, Sir Henry," said I, leaning my head towards him.

"I suspect you intend violent measures towards me, Doctor ——."

"Against *you*! Violent measures—against *any body*?—You are dreaming, Sir Henry!"

"Ah, I see further into your designs than you imagine, Doctor ——! You wish to extract my secret from me, for your own exclusive advantage. So, mark me—if you come again to —— Hall, you shall not return alive—so help me ——! Adieu!" He strode haughtily off, waved his hand to the terrified postilions, and we soon lost sight of the unhappy madman. I threw myself back in my seat completely bewildered. Not only my own personal safety, but that of Lady Anne was menaced. What might not frenzy prompt him to do, during my absence, and on my return? Full of these agitating thoughts, I rejoiced to find myself thundering townward, as fast as four horses could carry me, in obedience to the orders I had given the postilions, the instant that Sir Henry quitted us. At length we reached a steep hill, that compelled us to slacken our pace, and give breath to our panting horses. I opened the front window, and bespoke the nearest postilion.

"Boy, there! Are you in Sir Henry's service?"

"No, sir, not *now* exactly—but we sarves him as much as thof we was, for the matter of that," he replied, touching his hat.

"Were you surprised to see what occurred at starting?"

"No, sir," he replied, lowering his tone, and looking about him, as if he expected to find the Baronet at his heels. "He's done many a stranger thing nor that, sir, lately!"

"I suppose, then, you consider him not exactly in his right senses, eh?"

"It a'nt for the likes o' *me* to say such a thing of my betters, sir; but *this* I may make bold for to say, sir, if as how I, or any of my fellow-sarvants, had done the likes o' what we've latterly seen up at the Hall there, they'd a' clapped us into jail or bedlam long ago!"

"Indeed! Why, what has been going on?"

"You'll not tell of a poor lad like me—will you, sir?"

"Oh, no, you may be sure of that—I'll keep your secret."

"Well, sir," said he, speaking more unconstrainedly, turning round in his saddle full towards me—"first and foremost, he's discharged *me*, and Thomas here, my fellow-sarvant, an' we takes up at the inn, a mile or so from the Hall; likewise the coachman and the footman; likewise all the women sarvants—always excepting the cook, and my lady's maid—and an't *them* a few sarvants for to do all the work of that great Hall? An't *that* strange-like, sir?"

"Well, what else? How does Sir Henry pass his time?"

"Pass his time, sir? Why, sir, we hears from cook, as how he boils candles, sir," quoth the fellow, grinning.

"Boils candles, sirrah? What do you mean? Are earnest?"

"Yes, sir, I be indeed ! He'll boil as many as twenty in a day, in the cook's best saucepans ; and then he pours the most precious brandy into the mess—wasting good brandy—and then throws it all into a deep hole every night, that he has dug in the garden. 'Twas no later nor yesterday, sir, cook told me all—how she happened to be squinting through the key-hole, and no harm neither, sir (axing your pardon)—when a man goes on in sich ways as them—and seed him kneel down upon the dirty hearth, before the saucepan full of candles, as they were boiling, and pray sich gibberish—like !"

"Well !" said I, with a sigh, "but what does her ladyship all this while ?"

"Oh, sir, our poor lady is worn almost, in a manner, to skin and bone. She follows him about like a ghost, and cries her eyes out; but for all that she is so gentle-like, he's woundy starn with her, and watches her just like a cat does a mouse, as one would say ! Once he locked her in her bedroom all day, and only gave her bread and water ! But the strangest thing is yet to come, sir ; he makes out that it's *her* that's mad ! so that for a long time, we all believed it was so—for, sir, it's only of late, that we began to see how the real truth of the matter stood, sir. Sir Henry was always, since we've known him, a bit queer or so, but steady in the main ; and as our poor lady was always mopish and melancholic-like, it was natral we should give in to believe it was her that was, as one would say, melancholy mad, and so all true what Sir Henry said of her."

"Is Sir Henry ever violent ?"

"Lord, sir ! Mrs Higgins, that's the cook, tells strange tales of him just latterly. He bolts every door,

great and small, in the Hall, with his own hands, every night, and walks about in it with a loaded blunderbuss !”

“ Miss Sims,” said the further postilion, “ that’s my lady’s maid, told Mrs Higgins, and she told my sister, who told me, as a secret, sir, that Sir Henry always sleeps every night with a bare drawn sword under his pillow, and a couple of loaded pistols stuck into the watch-pockets, as they call ’em, and frightens my lady to death with his pranks !”

I could scarcely believe what they were telling me.

“ Why, my boy, I cannot believe that all this is true !”

“ ’Deed, sir, we wish as how it warn’t !”

“ How long have *you* known it ?”

“ Only a day back, or so.”

“ And why did not you set off for London, and tell —— ?”

“ Lord, sir, ~~us~~ spread about that Sir Henry was mad ! Nobody would believe us, for he’s woundy cunning, and can talk as grave as a judge, and as good as the parson, when he chooses ! an’ that being so, if we’d gone up to town with them stories, the great folk would ha’ come down, and he’d a’ persuaded them it was all false—and what would have become of *we* ?”

“ And what is become of the servants ? Are they all dumb ?”

“ Yes, sir, in a manner, seeing as how they have been bound to silence by our poor lady, till she should tell them to give the alarm ; an’ *he’s* been too cunning latterly to give her opportunity of doing so. She’ll be main glad o’ your coming, I’ll warrant me, for scarce a fly dare leave the house but he’d be after it !”

"Drive on—drive on, boys, for your lives," said I, finding we had at length surmounted the hill, and directed them to go at once to the house of Mr Courthrope. Indeed there was not a moment to be lost, for it was clear that the madman's suspicions were roused, indefinite as might be his apprehensions; and his cunning and violence, each equally to be dreaded, might prompt him to take some dangerous, if not fatal step, in my absence. Fortunately, I found Mr Courthrope at home, and immeasurably shocked he was at my intelligence. It seemed that the Baronet and he had been totally estranged for some months, owing to an affront, which he was now satisfied arose out of his unhappy relative's insanity. Our arrangements were soon made. We exchanged the chariot in which I had returned to town, for a commodious carriage calculated to hold four or five persons, and drove off at once to the residence of Dr Y——, one of the most eminent "mad-doctors," as they are somewhat unceremoniously denominated. Our interview was but brief. In less than half an hour, Dr Y——, Mr Courthrope, and I, with two keepers, deposited ourselves respectively within and without the vehicle, and set off direct for —— Hall.

Mr Courthrope and I were sad enough; but little Dr Y—— was calm and lively as if he were obeying an invitation to dinner!

"Suppose Harleigh should grow desperate—should offer resistance!" said Mr Courthrope, very pale.

"Nothing more likely," replied Dr Y——, coolly.

"But what is to be done? My cousin was always an athletic man; and now that the strength of madness"——

"Poh, my dear sir, he would be but as a child in the hands of those two fellows of mine outside—like a wild elephant between two tame ones—ha, ha!"

"*You*, I dare say, have witnessed so many of those scenes," said I, with a faint smile—for his indifference hurt me; it jarred upon my excited feelings.

"For Heaven's sake—for Lady Anne's sake, Dr Y——," said Mr Courthrope agitatedly, as a sudden turn of the road brought us in sight of —— Hall, "let nothing like violence be used."

"Oh, most assuredly not. 'Tis a system I always eschewed. Never do by foul, what may be accomplished by fair means. Our conduct will be regulated to a hair by that of Sir Henry. Only leave him to us, and, by hook or by crook, we'll secure him."

"But, suppose he should have fire-arms," said I; "I know he carries them—he pointed a loaded pistol at me this morning."

"My dear Doctor, how did you know it was *loaded*? 'Tis what one would have called at the schools a gratuitous assumption! Madmen have a vast *penchant* for terrifying with fire-arms; but somehow they always forget the ammunition!"

"But only put the case; suppose Sir Henry should have got possession of a pistol ready loaded to his hand!"

"Certainly, in such a case, something awkward might occur," replied Dr Y——, seriously, "but I trust a good deal to the effect of my eye upon him from the first. 'Tis a kind of talisman among my patients—ha, ha!"

"Poor Lady Anne!" exclaimed Mr Courthrope, "what will become of her?"

"Ah! she must be *reasoned* with, and kept out of the

way ; otherwise we may expect a *scene*, a thing I've a particular dislike to !" replied matter-of-fact Dr Y——.

Now, there was a certain something about this my professional brother that was intolerable to me ; a calm, self-satisfied air, a smirking civility of tone and manner, that, coupled with his truly dreadful calling, and the melancholy enterprise which he at present conducted, really revolted me. How doleful—how odious—would be the jocularity of Jack Ketch ! And, again, when the Doctor, who was a well bred man, saw the sickening agitation of his two companions, there was an artificial adaptation of his manner, in the tones of his voice, and the expression of his features, that offended me, because one felt it to be assumed, in consideration of our weakness ! He was, however, in his way, a celebrated and successful man, and I believe, deserved to be so.

In due time we reached the park gates, and Dr Y——, Mr Courthrope, and I, there alighted, directing the carriage to follow us at a leisurely pace to the hall-door. I rang the bell ; and, after waiting nearly a minute or two, an elderly woman answered our summons.

"Can we see Sir Henry Harleigh ?" enquired Mr Courthrope.

"No, sir," was the prompt reply.

"And why not ? My good woman, we *must* see Sir Henry immediately, on business of the highest importance."

"Indeed ! Then you should have come a little earlier !"

"Come a little earlier ?" said I ; "what do you mean ? Sir Henry himself appointed this evening."

"Then it's clear he must have changed his mind ; for he and my lady both set off in a post-chaise-and-four

some two hours ago, howsomever, and I don't know where, either ; perhaps you had better go after him !”

We stood looking at one another in amazement.

“ In what direction did he go ?” I enquired.

“ Down the road, sir. He desired me to tell any one that might call, that he was gone off to Wales.”

I sighed with vexation and alarm ; Mr Courthrope looked pale with apprehension ; while Dr Y——, with his eyes half-closed, stood looking with a smiling inquisitiveness at the confident woman that was addressing us. A pretty stand-still were we arrived at ! What was now to be done ?

“ Here !” said Dr Y——, in an under tone, beckoning us to follow him to a little distance from the door. We did so.

“ Poh, poh !” he whispered, taking our arms into his—
“ The woman is trifling with us. Sir Henry is at this moment in the Hall—ay, as surely as we are now here !”

“ Indeed ! How can you possibly”——

“ Ah, he must be very clever, either sane or insane, that can deceive *me* in these matters ! 'Tis all a trick of Sir Henry's—I'll lay my life on't. The woman did not tell her tale naturally enough. Come, we'll search the Hall, however, before we go back again on a fool's errand ! Come, my good woman,” said he, as we reascended the steps, “ you have not told us the truth. We happen to know that the Baronet and his lady are at this moment above stairs, for we saw him just now at the corner of the window.”

This cool invention confounded the woman, and she began to hesitate. “ Come,” pursued our spokesman, “ you had better be candid ; for *we* will be so—and tell

you we are determined to search this Hall from one end to the other, from top to bottom—but we will find him we come to seek ; it may be all the better for those who'll save us time and trouble," he added, significantly.

" Oh, lord !" replied the woman, with an air of vexation. " You must do as you please, gentlemen—I've given you my answer, and you'll take the consequences."

With this she left us. After a short consultation, Mr Courthrope volunteered to go through the principal rooms alone. In about ten minutes' time he returned, not having seen any thing of the fugitives, except a letter lying on the library-table, in the Baronet's frank, *the ink of which was scarcely dry*. This satisfied us of the falsehood of the woman's story. It proved only, however, a blank envelope. We determined together to commence a strict search over the whole Hall. Every room, however, we explored in vain, and began to despair of success. The back drawing-room we examined again, hoping to find some note or letter that might give us a clue to the Baronet's retreat. It commanded a fine view of the grounds ; and after standing for some moments at the window, narrowly scrutinizing every shrub or tree that we could fancy Sir Henry lurking either in, or near—we turned together in council once more. Where could he be ? Had he really left the place ? We cast our eyes on the mantel-piece and table, on which were scattered various papers, notes, cards, &c., and one or two volumes, with the Baronet's manuscript notes in the margin—and sighed. This, Mr Courthrope informed us, was Sir Henry's favourite room, because of the prospect it commanded. We could, however, see nothing to cast a ray of information upon the subject of our enquiries. We determined, then,

to commence a rigorous search of the outer premises, but were delayed for a time by the violence of the storm. The afternoon had been very gloomy, and at length the rain came down in torrents. The thunder rattled directly overhead, in fearful proximity, followed in a second or two by lightning of terrible vividness. Peal upon peal, flash after flash, amid the continued hissing of the hail and heavy rain, followed one another, with scarce a minute's intermission. Nothing attracted the eye without, but the drenched gloomy grounds, and the angry lightning-laden sky; a prospect this, which, coupled with thoughts of the melancholy errand on which we were engaged, completely depressed our spirits—at least I can answer for my own.

“Gloomy enough work this, both within and without!” exclaimed Dr Y——. “If Sir Henry is travelling, he will be cooled a little, I imagine.”

“What can he have done with Lady Anne? I tremble for her safety!” exclaimed Mr Courthrope.

“Oh, you may depend she's safely stowed somewhere or other! These madmen are crafty beyond”—said Dr Y——, when the doors of an old-fashioned oaken cabinet, which we had examined, but imagined locked, were suddenly thrown wide open, and forth stepped the Baronet, in travelling costume, with a composed, haughty air.

“Gentlemen,” said he, calmly, “are you aware of the consequences of what you are doing? Do you know that I am Sir Henry Harleigh, and that this happens to be my house? By what warrant—at whose command—do you thus presume to intrude upon my privacy?”

He paused, his hand continuing extended towards us with a commanding air. His attitude and bearing were

most striking. The suddenness of his appearance completely astounded Mr Courthrope and myself, but not so Dr Y——, the experienced Dr Y—— ! who, with a confident bow and smile, stepped forward to meet Sir Henry almost at the moment of his extraordinary *entrée*, just as if he had been awaiting it. Never, in my life, did I witness such a specimen of consummate self-possession.

"Sir Henry, you have relieved us," said Dr Y——, with animation, "from infinite embarrassment ; we have been searching for you in every corner of the house !"

"You have been—*searching*—for me, sir ! Your name !" exclaimed the Baronet, with mingled hauteur and astonishment, stepping back a pace or two, and drawing himself up to his full height.

"*Pray*, Sir Henry, relieve us, by saying where her ladyship is to be found !" pursued the imperturbable Dr Y——. I could scarce tell why, but I *felt* that the Dr had mastered the madman—as if by magic. The poor Baronet's unsteady eye wandered from Dr Y—— to me, and from me to Mr Courthrope.

"Once more, sir, I beg the favour of your name ?" he repeated, not, however, with his former firmness.

"Dr Y——," replied that gentleman, promptly, bowing low.

The Baronet started. "Dr Y——, of —— ?" he whispered, after a pause, in a low thrilling tone.

"Precisely—the same, at your service, Sir Henry," replied the Doctor, again bowing. Sir Henry's features whitened sensibly. He turned aside, as if he could not bear to look upon Dr Y——, and sunk into a chair beside him, murmuring, "Then I am ruined !"

"Do not, Sir Henry, distress yourself !" said Dr Y——,

mildly, approaching him—but he was motioned off with an air of disgust. Sir Henry's averted countenance was full of horror. We stood perfectly silent and motionless, in obedience to the hushing signals of Dr Y——.

"George," said Sir Henry, addressing Mr Courthrope in a faltering tone, "*You are not my enemy*"——

"Dear, dear Henry!" exclaimed Mr Courthrope, running towards him, and grasping his hand, while the tears nearly overflowed.

"Go and bring Lady Anne hither!" said the Baronet, his face still averted, "you will find her in the summer-house, awaiting my return."

Mr Courthrope, after an affirmative nod from Dr Y—— and myself, hurried off on his errand, and in a few moments returned, accompanied—or rather preceded by Lady Anne, who, in a travelling-dress, flew up the grand staircase, burst open the doors, and rushed into the room almost shrieking, "Where—where is he? Dear, dear Henry! my husband! What have they done to you? Whither are they going to take you? Oh, wretch!" she groaned, turning towards me her pale, beautiful countenance, full of desperation, "is all this *your* doing?—Love! love!" addressing her husband—who never once moved from the posture in which he had first placed himself in the chair, "I am your wife! Your own Anne!" and she flung her arms round his neck, kissing him with frantic vehemence.

"I thought we should have a scene!" whispered Dr Y—— in my ear, "'twas very wrong in me to permit her coming! Pray be calm, my lady," said he, "do, for God's sake—for pity's sake—be calm," he continued, apparently unnoticed by Sir Henry, whose eyes were

fixed on the floor, as if he were in profound meditation.

"You will only aggravate his sufferings!"

"Oh yes, yes," she gasped, "I'll be calm!—I am so!—There! I am very calm now!" and she strained her grasp of Sir Henry with convulsive violence—he all the while passive in her arms as a statue! Dr Y—— looked embarrassed. "This will never do—we shall have Sir Henry becoming unmanageable," he whispered.

"Can I say a single word to your ladyship, alone?" he enquired, softly.

"No—no—no!" she replied, with mournful vehemence through her closed teeth—"you shall NEVER part me from my husband! Shall they, love! dearest?" and loosing her embrace for a moment, she looked him in the face with an expression of agonizing tenderness, and suddenly reclasped her arms around him with the energy of despair.

"Speak to her ladyship—calm her—you alone have the power," said Dr Y——, addressing Sir Henry, with the air of a man who expects to be—who *knows* that he will be obeyed. His voice seemed to recall the Baronet from a reverie, or rather rouse him from a state of stupor, and he tenderly folded his lady in his arms, saying fondly, "Hush, hush, dearest! I will protect you!"

"There! there! did you hear him? Were these the words of—of—a—madman?" almost shrieked Lady Anne.

"Hush, Anne! my love! my dearest, sweetest Anne! They say we must part!" exclaimed the wretched husband, in tones of thrilling pathos, wiping away the tears that showered from his poor wife's eyes,—“but 'tis only for a while”——

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"They *never* shall! they NEVER shall! I won't—I won't—won't," she sobbed hysterically. He folded her closer in his arms—and looking solemnly upwards, repeated the words,—

"Angels—ever bright and fair—
Take—oh take her to your care!"

He then burst into a loud laugh, relaxed his hold, and his wretched wife fell, swooning, into the arms of Mr Courthrope, who instantly carried her from the room.

"Now, Sir Henry—not a moment is to be lost," said Dr Y——. "Our carriage is at the door—you must step into it, and accompany us to town. Her ladyship will follow soon after, in your own carriage."

He rose and buttoned his surtout.

"What," said he, eagerly, "has his Majesty *really* sent for me, and in a friendly spirit? But," addressing me, with a mysterious air, "you've not betrayed me, have you?"

"Never—and never can I, dear Sir Henry," I replied with energy.

"Then I at once attend you, Dr Y——. Royalty must not be trifled with. I suppose you have the sign-manual?" Dr Y—— nodded; and without a farther enquiry after Lady Anne, Sir Henry accompanied us down stairs, took his hat and walking-stick from the hall-stand, drew on his gloves, and, followed by Dr Y——, stepped into the carriage, which set off at a rapid rate, and was soon out of sight. I hastened, with a heavy heart, to the chamber whither Lady Anne had been conducted. Why should I attempt to dilate upon the sufferings I there witnessed—to exhibit my wretched patient writhing on the rack of torture? Sweet, suffering lady!

Your sorrows are recorded above ! Fain would I draw a curtain between your intense agonies, and the cold scrutiny of the unsympathizing world !

From Lady Anne's maid I gathered a dreadful corroboration of the intelligence I had obtained in the morning. True I found it to be, that every domestic, except herself and the cook, had been dismissed by the despotic Baronet ; the former retaining her place solely through the peremptoriness of his lady ; the latter from necessity. Why did not the disbanded servants spread the alarm ? —was explained by the consummate cunning with which Sir Henry, to the last, concealed his more violent extravagances, and the address with which he fixed upon Lady Anne the imputation of insanity, alleging frequently, as the cause of dismissing his servants, his anxiety to prevent their witnessing the humiliation of his lady. More effectually to secure himself impunity, he had supplied them liberally with money, and sent them into Wales ! On one occasion he had detected Sims—the maid—in the act of running from the Hall, with the determination, at all hazards, of disclosing the fearful thralldom in which they were kept by the madman ; but he seemed apprized of her movements—she fancied, even of her intentions—as if by magic ;—met her at the Hall gates, and threatened to shoot her, unless she instantly returned, and on her knees took an oath of secrecy for the future. He would not allow a stranger, or visiter of any description, under any pretence, to enter the precincts of the Hall, or any member of his family, except as above mentioned, to quit them. He had prayers three times a-day, and walked in procession every day at noon round the house—himself, his lady, her maid, and the cook ; with many other freaks

of a similar nature. He got up at night, and paraded with fire-arms about his grounds! I understood that these palpable evidences of insanity had made their appearance only for a few days before the one on which I had been summoned. Sir Henry, I found, had always been looked upon as an eccentric man; and he had tact enough to procure his unfortunate *Lady* the sympathy of his household, on the score of imbecility. After giving the maid such general directions as suggested themselves, to procure an immediate supply of attendants, and to have the neighbouring apothecary called in on the slightest emergency—and enjoining her to devote herself entirely to her unhappy lady—I returned to her chamber. The slight noise I made in opening and shutting the door startled her ladyship from the brief doze into which she had fallen a few minutes before I quitted her bedside. She continued in a state of lamentable exhaustion; and finding the soothing draught I had ordered for her was beginning to exhibit its drowsy agency, I resigned my patient into the hands of the apothecary whom I had sent for, and hastened up to town, by one of the London coaches which happened to overtake me.

Late in the evening Mr Courthrope called at my house, and informed me that they had a dreadful journey up to town. For the first mile or two the Baronet, he said, appeared absorbed in thought. He soon, however, began to grow restless—then violent—and ultimately almost unmanageable. He broke one of the carriage windows to atoms, and almost strangled one of the keepers, whom it was found necessary to summon to their assistance, by suddenly thrusting his hand into his neckerchief. He insisted on the horses' heads being turned towards the

Hall; and finding they paid no attention to his wishes, began to utter the most lamentable cries—which attracted many persons to the carriage. On reaching Somerfield House, the private establishment of Dr Y——, whither it was thought advisable, in the first instance, to convey the Baronet, till other arrangements could be made—he became suddenly quiet. He trembled violently—his face became pale as ashes, and he offered no opposition to his being led at once from the carriage into the house. He imagined it was the Tower. He sat in silent moodiness for a length of time, and then requested the attendance of a chaplain, and a solicitor. In a private interview with the former, he fell down upon his knees, confessing that he had several times attempted the life of Lady Anne, though he declared with solemn asseverations that he was innocent of *treason* in any shape. He owned, with a contrite air, that justice had at length overtaken him in his evil career. He imagined, it seemed, as far as they could gather from his exclamations, that he had that morning murdered his lady! On Mr Courthrope taking leave of him for the evening, he wrung his hands, with the bitterness of a condemned criminal who is parting with his friends for ever, and in smothered accents warned him to resist the indulgence of unbridled passions!

Well—a singular—a woful day's work had I gone through; and I thanked God, that—putting out of the question all other considerations—I had not suffered personal injury from the madman. How horrid was my suspense, at several periods of the day, lest he should suddenly produce fire-arms, and destroy either himself or his persecutors! Alas, how soon might I expect the distressing secret to make its appearance in the daily

newspapers, to become the subject of curiosity and heartless speculation! I resigned myself to rest that night, full of melancholy apprehensions for Lady Anne, as well as the Baronet; and my last fervent thoughts were of thankfulness to God for the preservation of my own reason hitherto, under all the troubles, anxieties, and excitements I had passed through in life!

I determined, on rising in the morning, to make such arrangements as would leave me at liberty to pay an early visit to Lady Anne; and was on the point of stepping into my chariot, to hurry through my morning round, when a carriage rolled rapidly to the door, and in a few seconds I observed her maid handing out Lady Anne Harleigh. Deeply veiled as she was, and muffled in an ample shawl, I saw at once the fearful traces of her yesterday's agony and exhaustion in her countenance and feeble tottering gait. She almost swooned with the effort of reaching the parlour. I soon learned her object in hurrying thus to town; it was to carry into effect an unalterable determination—poor lady!—to attend personally on Sir Henry—even in the character of his menial servant. It was perfectly useless for me to expostulate—she listened with impatience, and even replied with asperity.

“For mercy's sake, Doctor, why do you persist in talking thus? Do you wish to see me share the fate of my unhappy husband?—You choke me—you suffocate me!—I cannot breathe”—she gasped.

“Dearest Lady Anne!” said I, taking in mine her cold white hand—“try to overcome your feelings! My heart aches for you, indeed; but a solemn sense of duty forbids me to yield to you in this matter. You might gratify your excited feelings for the moment, by seeing Sir

Henry—but I take God to witness the truth with which I assure you that, in my belief, such a step would destroy the only chance left for his recovery. The constant presence of your ladyship would have the effect of inflaming still more his disordered—his excited feelings—till his malady would defy all control—and Heaven only knows what would be the consequences, as well to him as to yourself.” I paused ; she did not reply.

“ I thank God that he enables your ladyship to listen to reason in these trying circumstances. Rely upon it, Providence will strengthen you, and you will prove equal to this emergency !”

“ Oh, Doctor,” she murmured, clasping her hands over her face, “ you cannot sympathize with me ; you cannot feel how wretched—how desolate I am ! What will become of me ? Whither shall I go to forget myself ? Oh, my child—my child—my child !” she groaned, and fell back senseless. It was long before our attentions succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. What an object she lay in my wife’s arms ! Her beautiful features were cold and white as those of a marble bust ; the dew of agony was on her brow ; her hair was all dishevelled ; and thus—prostrate and heart-broken—she looked one on whom misfortune had dealt her heaviest blow ! As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, she yielded to my wife’s entreaties, and suffered herself to be conducted up to bed—and promised there to await my return, when I would bring her tidings of Sir Henry. In two or three hours’ time, I was able to call at Somerfield House. I found from Dr Y——, who told me that such cases were always fluctuating—that Sir Henry’s demeanour had undergone a sudden change. He had, from great vio-

lence and boisterousness, sunk into contemplative calmness and melancholy. On entering his chamber—where there was every comfort and elegance suited to his station—I found him seated at a desk writing. He received me courteously ; and but for that strange wildness of the eye, of which no madman can divest himself, there was no appearance of the awful change which had come over him.

“ You may retire, sir, for the present,” said the Baronet to his keeper, who, looking significantly at me, bowed, and withdrew.

“ Well, Sir Henry,” said I, drawing my chair to the table at which he was sitting—“ I hope your present residence is made as comfortable as circumstances”——

“ I neither deserve nor desire any thing agreeable,” he replied, gloomily. “ I know—I feel it all; I am conscious of my deep degradation ; but of the particular offence for which I am arrested, I solemnly declare that I am innocent. However,” he concluded, abruptly, “ I must not be diverted from what I am doing,” and inclining politely towards me, he resumed his pen. I sat watching him in silence for some minutes. He seemed to be unconscious of my presence—completely absorbed with what he was doing. I was turning about in my mind how I could best introduce the topic I wished, when he suddenly asked me, without removing his eyes from the paper, how I had left Lady Anne.

“ I am glad you ask after her, Sir Henry—for she is afraid you are offended with her.”

“ Not at all—not the least ! It is surely *I* who am the offender,” he replied, with a sigh.

“ Indeed ! her ladyship does not think so, however !

She is in town—at my house; will you permit me to bring her here?”

“Why—why—do the regulations of this place admit of females coming?” he asked, with a puzzled air, proceeding to ask, in a breath—“Has any thing further transpired?”

“Nothing,” I replied, not knowing to what he alluded.

“Will she be calm?”

“Why otherwise, Sir Henry?”

“Or object to your being present all the while?”

“No—I am sure she will not.”

“Mind—I cannot bear her to bring any bells with her!”

“Rely upon it, Sir Henry, you shall not be annoyed.”

“Well—then I beg you will leave me for the present, that I may prepare for the interview. Had we not better engage a short-hand writer to attend? You know she might say something of moment.”

“We will see that every thing is arranged. In two hours’ time, Sir Henry, then, you will be prepared?”

He bowed—resumed his pen, and I withdrew. There seemed little to be apprehended from the interview, provided he retained his present humour, and Lady Anne could overcome her agitation, and control her feelings.

On returning home, I found her ladyship had risen, and was sitting with my wife, in tears—but more composed than I had left her. I told her how calm and contented Sir Henry appeared—and the satisfaction with which he received the proposal of her visit: she clasped her hands together, and assured me, with a faint hysteric laugh, how *very* happy she was! Presently she began

to convince me that I need be under no apprehension for her—and repeated her conviction that she should preserve a perfect composure in Sir Henry's presence, over and over again, with such increasing vehemence, as ended in a violent fit of hysterics. My heart heavily misgave me for the event of the interview—however, there was now nothing for it but to try the experiment.

About six o'clock, her ladyship, together with her sister, Lady Julia —, who had been hastily summoned from the country, and Mr Courthrope, drove with me to Somerfield House. They were all shown into the drawing-room, where Dr Y— and I left them, that we might prepare his patient for the visit. Dr Y— saw no objection to the whole party being admitted: so, in a moment's time, we introduced the wretched couple to one another.

"Ah, Henry," exclaimed Lady Anne, the moment she saw him, rushing into his arms—where she lay for a while silent and motionless. I suspected she had fainted.

"Julia, is that you? How are you?" enquired the Baronet, with an easy air, still holding his wife in his arms. She sobbed violently. "Hush, Anne, hush!"—he whispered. "You *must* be calm; they allow no noise here, of any kind. They will order you to leave the room!—Besides—you disturb *me*—so that I shall never be able to get through the interview!" All this was said with the coolest composure; as if he were quite unconscious of being the object of his wife's agonizing attentions. Her sobs, however, became louder and louder. "Silence, Anne!" said the Baronet, sternly; "this is foolish!" Her arms instantly fell from around him, for she had swooned—and I bore her from the room—beg-

ging the others to continue till my return. I soon restored my suffering patient by a potent draught of sal volatile and water—and enabled her once more to return to her husband's presence. We were all seated—but conversation languished.

“It is now my bitter duty,” said the Baronet, with a serious air, breaking the oppressing silence, “to explain the whole mystery. Have you firmness, Anne, to bear it?”—She nodded—“And in the presence of so many persons?” Again she nodded—to speak was impossible.

“Perhaps we had better leave?” said I.

“No—not one of you, unless you wish. The more witnesses of truth the better,”—replied the Baronet—proceeding with much solemnity of manner—“I am not—I never was—a dishonourable man; yet I fear it will be difficult to persuade you to believe me, when you shall have heard all. The dreadful secret, however, must come out; I feel that my recent conduct requires explanation—that disguise is no longer practicable, or availing. The hand of God has brought me hither, and is heavy upon me—you see before you a wretch whom HE has marked with a curse heavier than that of Cain!”

He paused for a moment, and turned over the leaves of his manuscript, as if preparing to read from them. We all looked and listened with unfeigned astonishment. There was something about his manner that positively made me begin to doubt the fact of his insanity—and I was almost prepared to hear him acknowledge that for some mysterious purpose or another, he had but been feigning madness. Lady Anne, pale and motionless as a statue, sat near him, her eyes riveted upon him with

a dreadful expression of blended fondness, agony, and apprehension.

"Behold, then, in me," continued Sir Henry, in a stern under-tone—"an IMPOSTOR. The world will soon ring with the story; friends will despise me; the House of Commons will repudiate me; relatives will disown me; my wife even"—raising his eyes towards her—"will forsake me; I am no Baronet"—he paused—he was evidently striving to stifle strong emotions—"I have no right either to the title—which I have disgraced—the fortune which I have wantonly squandered—the hand which I have dishonoured." His lips, despite his efforts at compression, quivered, and his cheeks turned ashy pale. "But I take God to witness, that at the time of my marriage with this noble lady," pointing with a trembling hand to Lady Anne, "I knew not what I know now about this matter—that *another* was entitled to stand in my place, and enjoy the wealth and honours—what—does it not, then, confound you all?"—he enquired, finding that we neither looked nor uttered surprise at what he said—"Nothing like agitation at the confession? Is it, then, *no news*? Are you all prepared for it? Has, then, my privacy—my confidence—been violated? How is this, Lady Anne?" he pursued, with increasing vehemence—"Tell me, Lady Anne, is it *you* who have done this?" The poor lady forced a faint smile into her pallid features—a smile as of fond incredulity. "Ha! cockatrice! away!"—he shouted, springing from his chair, and pacing about the room in violent agitation. Lady Anne, with a faint shriek, was borne out of the room a second time insensible.

"Yes," continued the Baronet, in a high tone, regardless of the presence of his keeper, whom his violence had hurried back into the room, "that false woman has betrayed me to disgrace and ruin! She has possessed herself of my fatal secret, and turned it to my destruction! But for her it might have slept hitherto! Ha! this is the secret that has so long lain rankling at my heart—blighting my reason—driving me to crime—making my continual companion—the Devil—the great fiend himself—and hell all around me! Oh, I am choked! I am burnt up! I cannot bear it! What, Dr Y——, have *you* nothing to say to me, now you have secured me in your toils? Are you leagued with Lady Anne. *Lady Anne!*—*Lady!*—*she* will preserve her title, but it will be attached to the name of a villain! Ah! what will become of me! Speak, Doctor——," addressing me, who had turned to whisper to Mr Courthrope, "speak to me."

"While you are raving thus, it would be useless, Sir Henry"——

"*Sir Henry!* Do you, then, dare to mock me to my face?" He paused, stopped full before me, and seemed meditating to strike me. Dr Y—— came beside me, and the wretched madman instantly turned on his heel, and walked to another part of the room. Again he commenced walking to and fro, his arms folded, and muttering,—“The Commons, I suppose, will be impeaching me—ha, ha, ha!—and thus ends Sir Henry Harleigh, Baronet, member for the county of ——! Ah, ha, ha! What will X——, and Y——, and Z——,” naming well-known individuals in the Lower House, “what will they say to this! What will my constituents say! They will give me a public dinner again! The pride of the county will be there to meet me!”

Mr Courthrope caused Lady Anne and her sister, as soon as the former could be removed with safety, to be conveyed to his own residence, which they reached, happily, at the same time that Mrs Courthrope—one of Lady Anne's intimate friends—returned from the country, to pay her suffering relative every attention that delicacy and affection could suggest. What *now* was the situation of this once happy—this once brilliant—this once envied couple! Sir Henry—in a mad-house; Lady Anne—heart-broken, and, like Rachel, “refusing to be comforted!” All splendour faded—the sweets of wealth, rank, refinement, loathed! What a commentary on the language of the Royal Sufferer in Scripture—“And in my prosperity, I said, I shall *never* be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.”*

The ravings of Sir Henry, on the occasion last mentioned, of course passed away from my recollection, with many other of his insane extravagances, till they were suddenly revived by the following paragraph in a morning paper, which some days afterwards I read breathlessly and incredulously.

“We understand that the lamentable estrangement, both from reason and society, of a once popular and accomplished Baronet, is at length discovered to be connected with some extraordinary disclosures made to him some time ago concerning the tenure by which he at present enjoys all his large estates, and the title—as it is contended—wrongfully. The new claimant, who, it is

* Psalm, xxx. 6, 7.

said, has not been long in this country, and is in comparatively humble circumstances, has entrusted the prosecution of his rights to an eminent solicitor, who, it is whispered, has at length shaped his client's case in a form fit for the investigation of a court of law ; and a very formidable case, we hear, it is reported will be made out. If it should be successful, the present unfortunate possessor, in addition to being stripped of all he holds in the world, will have to account for several hundred thousand pounds of rents. The extensive and distinguished connexions of Sir ——, have, we understand, been thrown into the utmost consternation, and have secured, at an enormous expense, the highest legal assistance in the country."

Wonder, pity, alarm, perplexity, by turns assailed me, on reading this extraordinary annunciation, which squared with every word uttered by the Baronet on the occasion I have alluded to, and which we had considered the mere hallucination of a madman. Could, then, this dreadful —this mysterious paragraph—have any foundation in fact? Was it *this* that had shaken, and finally overturned, Sir Henry's understanding? And did Lady Anne know it? Good God, what was to become of them? Would this forthwith become the topic of conversation and discussion, and my miserable patients be dragged from the sacred retreats of sorrow and suffering, to become the subjects of general enquiry and speculation? Alas, by how slight a tenure does man hold the highest advantages of life!

I had proposed calling at Mr Courthrope's that day, to see Lady Anne. I should possibly have an opportunity, therefore, of ascertaining whether this newly-discovered

calamity constituted an ingredient of that "perilous stuff" which weighed upon her heart.

What an alteration had a fortnight worked on Lady Anne! In her bedchamber, when I entered, were her sister, Lady Julia, Mrs Courthrope, and her maid; the latter of whom was propping up her mistress in bed, with pillows. How wan was her once lovely face,—how wasted her figure! There was a tearless agony in her eye, a sorrowful resignation in her countenance, that spoke feelingly the

"Cruel grief that hack'd away her heart
Unseen, unknown of others!"

"What intelligence do you bring from Somerfield to-day, Doctor?" she whispered, after replying to my enquiries about her health.

"I have not seen him to-day, but I hear that he continues calm. His bodily health is unexceptionable."

"Is that a favourable sign?" she enquired faintly, shaking her head, as though she knew to the contrary.

"It may be, and it *may* not, according to circumstances. But how is your ladyship to-day?"

"Oh, so *much* better! I really feel getting quite strong—don't *you* think so, Julia?" said the feeble sufferer. Lady Julia sighed in silence.

"I shall be able to get about in a few days," continued Lady Anne, "and then—don't be so angry, Julia!—once at Somerfield—I—I know I shall revive again! I know I shall die if you do not give me my way.—Do, dear Doctor," her snowy attenuated fingers gently seized and compressed my hand,—“do persuade them to be reasonable! You can't think how they torment me about

it! They don't know what my feelings are"— She could utter no more. I endeavoured to pacify her with a general promise, that if she would keep herself from fretting for a fortnight, and was then sufficiently recovered, I would endeavour to bring about what she wished.

"Poor Sir Henry," said I, after a pause, addressing Lady Julia, "takes strange notions into his head."

"Indeed he does!" she replied, sadly; "what new delusion has made its appearance?"

"Oh, nothing new; he adheres to the belief that he is not the true Baronet; that he has no title to the fortune he holds!" No one made any reply; and I felt infinitely chagrined and embarrassed on account of having alluded to it. I mentioned another subject, but in vain.

"Doctor, you must know it to be true, that there is another who claims my husband's title and fortune!" whispered Lady Anne, a few minutes afterwards. I endeavoured to smile it off.

"*You* smile, Doctor; but my poor husband found it no occasion for smiling." She sobbed hysterically. "And what if it is true," she continued, "that we are beggars—that my child—oh!—I could bear it all if my poor Henry"—her lips continued moving, without uttering any sound; and it was plain she had fainted. I bitterly regretted mentioning the subject; but we had frequently talked about other crochets of Sir Henry's by his lady's bedside, without calling forth any particular emotion on her part. No allusion of any kind had been since made to the topics about which Sir Henry raved on the last occasion of Lady Anne's seeing him, by any member of the family; and I thought my mentioning it would prove either that Lady Anne was in happy ignorance of the

circumstances, or that they constituted a chief source of her wasting misery. The latter, alas ! proved to be the case ! She lay for some minutes rather like a delicate waxen figure before us, than actual flesh and blood. Never did I see any one fade so rapidly ; but what anguish had been hers for a long period ! And this poor wasted sufferer was relying upon being the nurse of her husband in a fortnight's time ! Oh, cruel delusion ! I left her, apprehensive that instead of matters assuming a more favourable aspect, a fortnight would see her more than half-way towards the grave.

" Doctor," whispered Lady Julia to me, as I descended the stairs, " have you seen that frightful paragraph in this day's newspaper ? "

" I have, my lady—and "——

" So has my poor sister ! " interrupted her ladyship. " We generally read over the newspapers before they are shown to her, as she insists on seeing them—but this morning it unfortunately happened that Sims took it up to her at once. Poor girl ! she soon saw the fatal paragraph, and I thought she would have died."

" Indeed—indeed, my lady, I never can forgive myself," said I, wringing my hands.

" Nay, Doctor, you are wrong. I am glad you have broken the ice ; she must be talked to on the subject, but we dared not begin."

" Pray, how long has her ladyship known of it ? "

" I believe about six months after Sir Henry became alarmed about it ; for, at first, he disbelieved it, and paid no attention to it whatever. He was never aware, however, that she knew the secret source of his anxiety and illness ; and as she saw him so bent on concealing it from

her, she thought it more prudent to acquiesce. Fancy, Doctor, what my poor sister must have suffered ! She is the noblest creature in the world, and could have borne that which has almost killed her husband, and quite destroyed his reason. People have noticed often his strange manner ; and circulated a hundred stories to the discredit of both, which Anne has endured without a murmur, often when her heart was near breaking ! Alas ! I am afraid she will sink at last !” She hurried from me, overcome by her emotions, and I drove off, not much less oppressed myself.

During the next few weeks, I visited, almost daily, both Sir Henry and Lady Anne. It was a dreadful period for the former, whose malady broke out into the most violent paroxysms, rendering necessary restraints of a very severe character. Who could have believed that he was looking on the once gay, handsome, accomplished, gifted Baronet, in the howling maniac, whom I once or twice shuddered to see chained to a staple in the wall, or fastened down on an iron-fixed chair, his head close shaven, his eyes blood-shot and staring, his mouth distorted, uttering the most tremendous imprecations ! I cannot describe the emotions that agitated me as I passed from this frightful figure, to the bedside of the peaceful, declining sufferer, his wife, buoying her up from time to time with accounts of his improvement ! How I trembled as I told the falsehood !

Sir Henry's bodily health, however, presently improved ; his flesh remained firm ; the wilder paroxysms ceased, and soon assumed a mitigated form. In his eye was the expression of settled insanity ! I confess I began to think, with the experienced Dr Y——, that there

was little reasonable hope of recovery. His case assumed a different aspect almost daily. He wandered on from delusion to delusion, each more absurd than the other, and more tenaciously retained. On one occasion, after great boisterousness, he became suddenly calm, called for twenty quires of foolscap, and commenced writing from morning to night, without intermission, except for his meals. This, however, remained with him for nearly three weeks, and the result proved to be a speech for the House of Commons, vindicating his alleged ill-treatment of Lady Anne, and his claims to his title and estates! It must have taken nearly a fortnight to deliver! He insisted on his keeper, a very easy-tempered phlegmatic fellow, hearing him read the whole—good occupation for a week—when the Baronet tired in the middle of his task. He always paused on my entrance; and when I once requested him to proceed in my presence, he declined, with a great air of offended dignity. I several times introduced the name of Lady Anne, curious to see its effect upon him; he heard it with indifference, once observing, “that he had formed a plan about her which would not a little astonish certain persons.” I represented her feebleness—her emaciation. He said coldly that he was sorry for it, but she had brought it upon herself, quoting the words, “Thus even handed justice,” &c. He adopted a mode of dress, that was remarkably ridiculous, and often provoked me to laughter, in spite of myself, and all my melancholy feelings concerning him—a suit of tightly fitting jacket and pantaloons, made of green baize, with silk stockings and pumps. His figure was very elegant and well proportioned, but in this costume, and with his hair cut close upon his head, looked most painfully absurd.

This was Sir Henry Harleigh, Baronet, M.P. for the county of —, husband of the beautiful Lady Anne —, master of most accomplishments, and owner of a splendid fortune! Thus habited, I have surprised him, mounted on a table in the corner of his room, haranguing his quiet keeper, with all the vehemence of parliamentary oratory; and on my entrance, he would sneak down with the silliest air of schoolboy sheepishness! He became very tractable, took his meals regularly, and walked about in a secluded part of the grounds, without being mischievous, or attempting to escape. And who shall say that he was not even *happy*? Barring a degradation, of which only *others* were sensible, what had he to trouble him? Where, in this respect, lay the difference between Sir Henry, wandering from delusion to delusion, revelling in variety, and the poet, who always lives in a world of dreams and fancies all his own? Is it not a most merciful provision that the sufferer of this, the most awful of misfortunes, should be not only quite unconscious of it, but even happy in his delusion!

And Lady Anne—the beautiful—the once lively Lady Anne—was drooping daily! Alas, in what a situation were husband and wife! I could not help likening them to a noble tree, wreathed with the graceful, the affectionate ivy, and blasted by lightning—rending the one asunder, and withering the other. For so in truth it seemed. Lady Anne was evidently sinking under her sorrows. All the attentions of an idolizing family, backed by the fond sympathies of “troops of friends”—even the consolations of religion—seemed alike unavailing!

The reader has not yet, however, been put into distinct possession of the cause of all this devastation.

It seems that shortly after his marriage, his solicitor suddenly travelled to the Continent after him, to communicate the startling, but in the Baronet's estimation, ridiculous intelligence, that a stranger was laying claim to all he held in the world, of title and fortune. The lawyer at length returned to England, over-persuaded by the Baronet, to treat the matter with contemptuous indifference ; and nothing further was in fact heard for some months, till, soon after Sir Henry's return, he received one evening, at his club—a circumstance which I have before said, appeared to confirm certain speculations then afloat—a long letter, purporting to come from the solicitor of the individual preferring the fearful claim alluded to. It stated the affair at some length, and concluded by requesting certain information, which, said the writer, might possibly have the effect of convincing his client of his error, and conducing to the abandonment of his claim. This shocking communication at length roused the Baronet from his lethargy. Several portions of it tallied strangely with particular passages in the family history of Sir Henry, who instantly hurried with consternation to his solicitor, by whom his worst apprehensions were aggravated. Not that the lawyer considered his case desperate ; but he at once prepared his agitated client for long, harassing, and expensive litigation, and exposure of the most public nature. It cannot be wondered at that a sense of his danger should prey upon his feelings, and give him that disturbed manner which had occasioned the speculations, hints, and innuendoes, mentioned in an early part of this paper. He anxiously concealed from his lady the shocking jeopardy in which their all on earth was placed ; and the constant

effort and constraint—the withering anxiety—the long continued apprehensions of ruin—at length disordered, and finally overthrew his intellects. What was the precise nature of his adversary's pretensions, I am unable to state technically. I understand it consisted of an alleged earlier right under the entail. To support his claim, every quarter was ransacked for evidence by his zealous attorney, often in a manner highly indelicate and offensive. The upstart made his pretensions as public as possible; and a most imprudent overture made by Sir Henry's solicitor, was unscrupulously—triumphantly—seized upon by his adversary, and through his means at length found its way into the newspapers. The additional vexation this occasioned Sir Henry may be readily imagined; for, independently of his mortification at the circumstance, it was calculated most seriously to prejudice his interests; and when he kept ever before his agonized eyes the day of trial which was approaching, and the horrible catastrophe, he sunk under the mighty oppression. Lady Anne had, despite her husband's attempts at secrecy, for some time entertained faint suspicions of the truth; but as he obstinately, and at length sternly interdicted any enquiry on her part, and kept every document under lock and key, he contrived to keep her comparatively in the dark. He frequently, however, talked in his sleep, and often did she lie awake, listening to his mysterious expressions with sickening agitation. The illness of Sir Henry and his lady, together with its occasion, were now become generally known, and the cruel paragraph in the morning paper above copied, was only the precursor of many similar ones, which at length went to the extent of hinting, generally,

the nature of the new claimant's pretensions, with the grounds of Sir Henry's resistance.

Recollecting the event of Lady Anne's last interview with Sir Henry, the reader may imagine the vexation and alarm with which, at the time she imagined I had fixed, I heard her insist upon the performance of my promise. Backed by the entreaties of her relatives, and my conviction of the danger that might attend such a step, I positively refused. It was in vain that she implored, frequently in an agony of tears, occasionally almost frantic at our opposition—we were all inexorable. During a month's interval, however, very greatly to my surprise and satisfaction, her health sensibly improved. We had contrived to some extent to occupy her attention with agreeable pursuits, and had from time to time soothed her with good accounts of Sir Henry. Her little son, too—a charming creature—was perpetually with her; and his prattle served to amuse her through many a long day. She was at length able to leave her bed, and spend several hours down stairs; and under such circumstances, she renewed her importunities with better success. I promised to see Sir Henry, and engaged to allow her an interview, if it could be brought about safely. In order to ascertain this point, I called one day upon the Baronet, who still continued at Somerfield House, though several of his relatives had expressed a wish that he should be removed to private quarters. This, however, I opposed, jointly with Dr Y——, till the Baronet had exhibited symptoms of permanent tranquillity. I found no alteration in the mode of his apparel. If his ridiculous appearance shocked me, what must be its effect on his unhappy lady? He wore—as he did

every day—his tight-fitting green baize [what first put it into his head, I am at a loss to imagine], and happened to be in excellent humour; for he had just before beaten a crazy gentleman in the establishment, at chess. He was walking to and fro, rubbing his hands, detailing his triumph to his keeper with great glee, and received me with infinite cordiality. * * *

“What should you say to seeing company, Sir Henry?—Will you receive a visiter, if I bring one?”

“Oh, yes—happy to see them—that is, any day but to-morrow—any day but to-morrow,” he replied briskly; “for to-morrow I shall be particularly engaged: the fact is, I am asked to dinner with the king, and am to play billiards with him.”

“Ah! I congratulate you!—And, pray, does his majesty come to Somerfield, or do you go to Windsor?”

“Go to Windsor?—Lord bless you, his majesty lives *here*—this is his palace; and I have the honour to fill an important office in the household!—Were you not aware of that?”

“True—true; but at what hour do you wait on his majesty?”

“Three o'clock precisely—to the millionth part of a second.”

“Hem!—Suppose, then, I take the opportunity of bringing my friend—who is very anxious to see you—at twelve o'clock?”

He paused, apparently considering. I was vexed that he made no enquiry as to the person I intended to introduce. I determined, however, that he should know.

“Well, Sir Henry, what say you—shall she come at twelve o'clock?”

“If she will go soon, I don’t mind; but, you know, I must not be flurried, as I shall have so soon to attend the king. How can I play billiards, if my hand trembles?—Oh, dear, it would never do—would it?”

“Certainly not; but what can there possibly be to flurry you in seeing Lady Anne?”

“Lady Anne!” he echoed, with a sheepish air—“well, you know, Lady Anne!—well—she can make allowances—eh?”

Ay, indeed—poor madman—thought I, if such a spectacle as yourself does not paralyze her—replying, “Oh, yes—all allowances, supposing any to be necessary, you may depend upon it. She’s very considerate, and longs to see you.”

“Well, I hope you’ll be in the room? for, do you know, the thought of it almost makes me sick—don’t I look pale?” he enquired of his keeper—“It is so long since I have seen her. Will she—I hope—what I mean, is—has she recovered from the wound?”

“Ha, long ago! She was more frightened than hurt at the accident.”

“*Accident!* is that what it is called? All the better for me, you know,” he replied, with a serious air. “However, I consent to see her at the hour you mention. Tell her to be calm, and not to try to frighten me, considering the king.” With this he shook my hand, opened the door, and I took my leave. Dr Y—— greatly doubted the prudence of the step we were about to take; but we were too far committed with her ladyship to recede. I grew alarmed, on returning home, with the apprehension of her mere presence—however calmly she might behave—stirring up slumbering associations in the mind

of her husband, that might lead to very unpleasant results. However, there was nothing for it but to await the experiment, and hope for the best.

The following morning, I called on her ladyship about eleven o'clock, and found her dressed and waiting. Outdoor costume seemed as if it did not become one so long an invalid. She looked flushed and feverish, but made great efforts to sustain the appearance of cheerfulness. She told me of her hearty breakfast—(a cup of tea, and part of an egg!)—and spoke of her increasing strength. She could almost, she said, *walk* to Somerfield. Lady Julia trembled, Mrs Courthrope was deadly pale, and I felt deeply apprehensive of the effect of the coming excitement upon such shattered nerves as those of Lady Anne.

Into the roomy carriage we stepped, about half-past eleven. The day was bright and cold—the air, however, refreshing. As we approached Somerfield, it was evident that but for the incessant use of her vinaigrette, Lady Anne must have fainted. We were all silent enough by the time we reached the gates of Dr Y——'s house. Lady Anne was assisted to alight, and, leaning on my arm and that of her sister, walked up with tottering steps to the house, where Mrs Y—— received her with all respectful attention. A glass of wine considerably reassured the fainting sufferer; and while she paused in the drawing-room to recover her breath, I stepped to the Baronet's apartment to prepare him for a suitable reception of his lady. Dr Y—— informed me that Sir Henry had been talking about it ever since. I found him pacing slowly about his chamber, dressed, alas! with additional absurdity. In vain, I found, had both

Dr Y—— and his keeper expostulated with him: they found that nothing else would keep him in humour. He wore, over his usual tight-fitting green baize dress, a flaming scarlet sash, with a massive gold chain round his neck. An ebony walking-stick was worn as a sword; and his cap, somewhat like that of a hussar, was surmounted with a peacock's feather, stripped, all but the eye at the top, and nearly three feet high. On this latter astounding appendage, I found, he particularly prided himself. I implored him to remove it, but he begged me, somewhat haughtily, to allow him to dress as he pleased. I protest I felt sick at the spectacle. What a frightful object to present to Lady Anne! However, we might prepare her to expect something *outré* in her husband's appearance. "Permit me to ask, Sir Henry," said I, resolved upon a last effort, "why you are in full dress?"

He looked astonished at the question. "I thought, Doctor, I told you of my engagement with his majesty?"

"Oh, ay, true; but perhaps you will receive your lady uncovered," said I, pressing for a dispensation with the abominable head-dress.

"No, sir," he replied, quietly but decisively, and I gave up the point. His keeper whispered to me at the door, that Sir Henry alleged as a reason for dressing himself as I have described, his having to attend the king immediately after the interview with his lady; so that he would have no time for dressing in the interval.

"Is the *party* ready?" enquired the Baronet, interrupting our momentary *tête-à-tête*. I hesitated; I was suddenly inclined, at all hazards, to put off the dreaded interview; but I dared not venture on such a step.

"Y—yes, Sir Henry, and waits your pleasure to throw herself into your arms."

"What! good God! throw herself into my arms! throw herself into my arms! was there ever such a thing heard of!" exclaimed the Baronet with a confounded air; "no, no! I can admit of no such familiarities! that is going *rather* too far—under the circumstances—eh?" turning towards his keeper, whom—most reluctant to assume it—he had thrust into a costume something like that of an Austrian soldier. "What do you say?" The man bowed in acquiescence.

"And further, Doctor," continued the Baronet, pointing to his keeper, "this gentleman, my secretary, must be present all the while to take notes of what passes."

"Undoubtedly," I replied, with an air of intense chagrin, inwardly cursing myself for permitting the useless and dangerous interview. I hastened back to the apartment in which I had left the ladies, and endeavoured to prepare Lady Anne, by describing with a smile, her husband's dress. She strove to smile with me, and begged that she might be led into his presence at once. Leaning between Lady Julia and myself, she shortly tottered into the Baronet's room, having first, at my suggestion, drawn down her black veil over her pale face.

"Pen! pen! pen!" hastily whispered the Baronet to his keeper, as we opened the door—and the latter instantly took his seat at the table, before a desk, with pens and ink. The Baronet bowed courteously to us as we entered.

"Speak to him," I whispered, as I led in her ladyship. She endeavoured to do so, but her tongue failed her. Her lips moved, and that was all. Lady Julia spoke for

her sister, in tremulous accents. Lady Anne closed her eyes on seeing the fantastic dress of her husband, and shook like an aspen leaf.

"Harry, dearest Harry," at length she murmured, stretching her trembling arms towards him, as if inviting him to approach her. Sir Henry, with a polite, but distant air, took off his cap for a moment, and then carefully replaced it, without making any reply.

"Shall we take seats, Sir Henry?" I enquired.

"Yes—she may be seated," he replied, with an authoritative air, folding his arms, and leaning against the corner of the window, eyeing his lady with curious attention.

"Are you come here of your own free will?" said he, calmly.

"Yes, Henry, yes," she whispered.

"Put that down," said the Baronet, in an under tone, to his secretary.

"Are you recovered?"

"Quite, dearest!" replied his lady, faintly.

"Put *that* down," repeated the Baronet, quickly, looking at his "secretary" till he had written it. There was a pause. I sat beside Lady Anne, who trembled violently, and continued deadly pale.

"I am sure, Sir Henry," said I, "you are not displeased at her ladyship's coming to see you? If you are not, *do* come and tell her so, for she fears you are offended!" She grasped my fingers with convulsive efforts, without attempting to speak. Sir Henry, after an embarrassed pause, walked from where he had been standing, till he came directly before her, saying, in a low tone, looking earnestly into her countenance, "God

be my witness, Anne, I bear you no malice; is it thus with you?" elevating his finger, and looking towards his keeper, intimating that he was to take down her reply—but none was made. He dropped slowly on one knee, drew the glove off his right hand, as if going to take hold of Lady Anne's, and tenderly said, "Anne, will you give me no reply?" There was no madness in either his tone or manner, and Lady Anne perceived the alteration.

"Harry! Harry! Dearest! my love!" she murmured, suddenly stretching towards him her hands, and fell into his arms, where she lay for a while motionless.

"Poor creature! How acute her feelings are!" exclaimed the Baronet, calmly. "You should strive to master them, Anne, as I do. I bear you no ill-will; I know you had provocation! How her little heart beats," he continued musingly. "Why, she has fainted! How very childish of her to yield so!"

It was true; the unhappy lady had fainted, and lay unconsciously in her more unconscious husband's arms. Her sister, weeping bitterly, rose to remove her; but the Baronet's countenance became suddenly clouded. He allowed us to assist his lady, by removing her bonnet, but continued to grasp her firmly by the wrists, staring into her face with an expression of mingled concern and wonder. His keeper's practised eye evidently saw the storm rising, and came up to him.

"You had better let her ladyship be removed!" he whispered into his ear authoritatively, eyeing him fixedly, at the same time gently disengaging her arms from his grasp.

"Well—be it so; I'm sorry for her; I've a strange

recollection of her kindness ; and is it come to this, poor Anne !” he exclaimed, tremulously, and walked to the further window, where he stood with his back towards us, evidently weeping. We removed Lady Anne immediately from the room ; and it was so long before she recovered, that we doubted whether it would be safe to remove her home that day. “ Well, as far as I am concerned,” thought I, as I bent over her insensible form, “ this is the last time I will be a party to the torture inflicted by such a scene as this, though in obedience to your own wishes !” As I was passing from the room in which she lay, I encountered Sir Henry, followed closely by his keeper.

“ Whither now, Sir Henry,” I enquired, with a sigh.

“ Going to tell the king that I cannot dine with him to-day, as I had promised, for I am quite agitated, though I scarce know why. Who brought Lady Anne to me ?” he whispered. I made him no reply. “ I am glad I have met you, however ; we’ll take a turn in the grounds, for I have something of the highest consequence to tell you.”

“ Really you must excuse me, Sir Henry ; I have”——

“ Are you in earnest, Doctor ? Do you know the consequences of refusing to attend to my wishes ?”

I suffered him to place my arm in his, and he led me down the steps into the garden. Round, and round, and round we walked, at a rapid rate, his face turned towards me all the while with an expression of intense anxiety—but not a syllable did he utter. Faster and faster we walked, till our pace became almost a run, and, beginning to feel both fatigued and dizzy, I gently swayed him from the pathway towards the door-steps.

"Poor—poor Anne!" he exclaimed in a mournful tone, and starting from me abruptly, hurried to a sort of alcove close at hand, and sat down, covering his face with his handkerchief, his elbows resting upon his knees. I watched him for a moment from behind the door, and saw that he was weeping, and that bitterly. Poor Sir Henry! Presently one of his brother captives approached him, running from another part of the grounds, in a merry mood, and slapping him instantly on the back, shouted "I am the Lord of the Isles!"

"I can't play billiards with your majesty to-day," replied Sir Henry, looking up, his eyes red and swollen with weeping.

"Embrace me, then!" said the lunatic; and they were forthwith locked in one another's arms.—"You are in tears!" exclaimed the stranger, himself beginning suddenly to cry; but in a moment or two he started off, putting his hand to his mouth, and bellowing, "Yoicks—yoicks! Stole away! Stole away!"

The Baronet relapsed into his former mood, and continued in a similar posture for several minutes, when he rose up, wiped away his tears, and commenced walking again round the green, his arms folded on his breast as before, and talking to himself with great vehemence. I could catch only a few words here and there, as he hurried past me. "It will never be believed!—What could have been my inducement?—When will it be tried?—I saw all the while through his disguise!—My Secretary—if acquitted—released—discovery—ennobled"—were fragments of his incoherences. Alas! what an object he looked! I could not help thinking of the contrast he now afforded to the animated figure he had

presented to the eye of the beholder from the gallery of the House of Commons—the busy eager throngs of the clubs—and as the man of fashion and literature !

*“ Hei mihi, qualis erat ! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuvias indutus Achillis,
Vel Danaûm Phrygios jaculatus puppibus ignes ! ”*

On regaining her room, I found Lady Anne had been relieved by a copious flood of tears. She continued weeping hysterically, and uttering wild incoherences for some time, nor could the entreaties or commiserations of those around her, assuage her grief. When at length her paroxysm had abated, from exhaustion, she expressed a determination not to be removed from the house in which her unfortunate husband resided ! It was in vain that we represented the peril with which such a resolution was attended, as well to herself as Sir Henry ; she was deaf to our solicitations, regardless of our warnings. She requested Mrs Y—— to inform her whether their house was fully occupied ; and on receiving a hesitating answer in the negative, at once engaged apartments occupying the whole of the left wing of the building, careless, she said, at what expense. The result was, that, finding her inflexible on this point, the requisite arrangements were at once entered upon, and that very night she, with her sister and maid, slept under the same roof with her unconscious—her afflicted husband. Every measure was taken to secure her from danger, and keep her as much out of Sir Henry's way as possible.

Nearly a month passed away without her having been once in Sir Henry's company, or even seeing him, for

more than a moment or two together; and, unlikely as it had seemed, her health and spirits appeared rather to improve than otherwise. At length the Baronet, being taken in a happy mood, was informed that she had long been a resident in Somerfield House, at which he expressed no surprise, and consented to her being invited to take tea in his apartment. He was very shy and silent during the interview, and seemed under constraint till his guests had taken leave of him. Gradually, however, he grew reconciled to their visits, which he occasionally returned—always accompanied by his “secretary”—and took great pleasure in hearing the sisters play on the piano. He composed verses, which they pretended to set to music; he brought them flowers, and received various little presents in return. For hours together he would sit with them reading, and hearing read, novels and newspapers—and, in short, grew in a manner humanized again. He treated Lady Anne with great civility, but towards her sister Julia, he behaved as if he were courting her! They soon prevailed upon him to discard the absurd peacock’s feather he frequently wore, always on Sundays—accepting, in its stead, a small drooping ostrich feather, which also, in its turn, he was by and by induced to lay aside altogether, as well as to assume more befitting clothing. They could not, however, dislodge from his crazed imagination the idea that he was confined in prison, awaiting his trial for the murder of his wife, and high treason.

How can I do justice to the virtues of his incomparable wife, or sufficiently extol her unwearying, her ennobling self-devotion to the welfare of her afflicted husband! Her only joy was to minister to his comfort, at whatever

cost of feeling, or even health, at all hours, in all seasons ; to bear with his infinite, incongruous whims, perversities, and provocations ; to affect delight when *he* was delighted ; to soothe and comfort him under all his imaginary grievances. Her whole thoughts, when absent from him, were absorbed in devising schemes for his amusement and occupation. She would listen to no entreaties for cessation from her anxious labours ; no persuasions, no inducements could withdraw her even for a moment from the dreary scene of her husband's humiliation and degradation. Hail, woman, exalted amongst thy sex ! Eulogy would but tarnish and obscure the honour that is thy due !

All, however, was unavailing ; the unhappy sufferer exhibited no symptom of mental convalescence : on the other hand, his delusions became more numerous and obstinate than ever. He seemed to be totally unconscious of Lady Anne's being his *wife* ; he treated her, and spoke of her, as an amiable companion, and even made her his confidant. Amongst other vagaries, he communicated to her a long story about his attachment to a girl he had seen about the premises, and earnestly asked her opinion in what way he could most successfully make her an offer !

He addressed her, one morning, as Queen, receiving her with the most obsequious obeisances. He persisted in this hallucination with singular pertinacity. All poor Lady Anne's little familiarities and endearments were thenceforth at an end ; for he seemed so abashed by her presence, that no efforts of condescension sufficed to reassure him, and she was compelled to support a demeanour consistent with the station which his crazed imagination

assigned her. His great delight was to be sent on her royal errands about the house and grounds! He could hardly ever be prevailed upon to sit, at least at ease, in her presence; and was with difficulty induced to eat at the same table. The agony I have seen in her eye on these occasions! Compelled to humour his delusions, she wore splendid dresses and jewels; and dismissed him on every occasion, by coldly extending her hand, which he would kiss with an air of reverent loyalty!

He believed himself to have been elevated to the rank of a general-officer, and insisted on being provided with a military band, to play before his windows every evening after dinner. He invited me, one day, in the Queen's name, to dinner in his apartments, some time after this delusion had manifested itself. It was a soft September evening, and the country round about was every where bronzed with the touch of autumn. During dinner Sir Henry treated his lady with all the profound respect and ceremony due to royalty, and I, of course, was obliged to assume a similar deportment, while she, poor soul! was compelled to receive with condescending urbanity attentions, every one of which smote her heart as an additional evidence of the inveteracy of her husband's malady. I observed her narrowly. There was no tear in her eye—no flurry of manner—no sighing: hers was the deep silent anguish of a breaking heart!

Shortly after dinner had been removed, we drew our chairs—Lady Anne in the centre, seated on a sort of throne, specially provided for her by the Baronet—in a circle round the ample bow-window that overlooked the most sequestered part of the grounds connected with the establishment, as well as a sweep of fine scenery in the

distance. In a bower, a little to our right, was placed Sir Henry's band, who were playing very affectingly various pieces of brilliant military music. By my direction, privately given beforehand, they suddenly glided, from a bold march, into a concert on French horns. Oh, how exquisite was that soft melancholy wailing melody ! The hour—the deepening gloom of evening—the circumstances—the persons—were all in mournful keeping with the music to which we were listening in subdued silence. Lady Anne's tears stole fast down her cheeks, while her eyes were fixed with sad earnestness upon her husband, who sat in a low chair, a little on her left hand, his chin resting on the palm of his hand, gazing with a melancholy air on the darkening scenery without. Occasionally I heard Lady Anne struggling to subdue a sob, but unsuccessfully. Another, and another, and another forced its way—and I trembled lest her excitement should assume a more violent form. I saw her, almost unconsciously, lay her hand upon that of the Baronet, and clasp it with convulsive energy. So she held it for some moments, when the madman slowly turned round, looking her full in the face ; his countenance underwent a ghastly change, and fixing on her an eye of demoniac expression, he slowly rose in his seat, seeming, to my disturbed fancy, an evil spirit called up by the witchery of music, and sprung out of the room. Lady Anne, with a faint groan, fell at full length upon the floor ; her sister, shrieking wildly, strove to raise her in vain ; I hurried after the madman, but finding his keeper was at his heels, returned. I never can forget that dreadful evening ! Sir Henry rushed out of the house, sprung at one bound over a high fence, and sped across a field,

amidst the almost impervious gloom of evening, with steps such as those of the monster of Frankenstein. His keeper, with all his efforts, could not gain upon him, and sometimes altogether lost sight of him. He followed him for nearly two miles, and at length found that he was overtaking the fugitive. When he had come up within a yard of him, the madman turned round unexpectedly, struck his pursuer a blow that brought him to the ground, and immediately scrambled up into a great elm-tree that stood near, from amidst whose dark foliage he was presently heard howling in a terrific manner; anon, there was a crashing sound amongst the branches, as of a heavy body falling through them, and Sir Henry lay stunned and bleeding upon the ground. Fortunately the prostrate keeper had called out loudly for assistance as he ran along; and his voice attracted one or two of the men whom I had despatched after him, and between the three, Sir Henry was brought home again, to all appearance dead. An eminent surgeon in the neighbourhood was summoned in to his assistance, for I could not quit the chamber of Lady Anne—she was totally insensible, having fallen into a succession of swoons since the moment of Sir Henry's departure; Lady Julia was in an adjoining room, shrieking in violent hysterics; and, in short, it seemed not impossible that she might lose her reason, and Sir Henry and Lady Anne their lives. 'Tis a small matter to mention at such a crisis as this, but I recollect it forcibly arrested my attention at the time—the band of musicians, unaware of the catastrophe that had occurred, according to their orders, continued playing the music that had been attended with such disastrous consequences; and as Lady Anne's bedchamber happened to be in that part of

the building nearest to the spot where the band were stationed, we continued to hear the sad wailing of the bugles and horns without, till it occurred to Mrs Y—to send and silence them. This little incidental circumstance—the sudden mysterious seizure of Sir Henry—the shrieks of Lady Julia—the swoons of Lady Anne—all combined—completely bewildered me. It seemed to be a dream.

I cannot—I need not—dwell upon the immediate consequences of that sad night. Suffice it to say, Sir Henry was found to have received severe but not fatal injury, which, however, was skilfully and successfully treated; but he lay in a state of comparative stupor for near a week, at which period his mental malady resumed its wildest form, and rendered necessary the severest treatment. As for Lady Anne, her state became eminently alarming; and as soon as some of the more dangerous symptoms had subsided, we determined on removing her, at all hazards, from her present proximity to Sir Henry, to — Hall, trusting to the good effects of a total change of scene and of faces. She had not strength enough to oppose our measures, but suffered herself to be conducted from Somerfield without an effort at complaint. I trembled to see an occasional vacancy in the expression of her eye; was it *impossible* that her husband's malady might prove at length contagious? Many weeks passed over her, before Lady Anne exhibited the slightest signs of amendment. Her shocks had been too numerous and severe—her anxieties and agonies too long continued—to warrant reasonable hopes of her ultimate recovery. At length, however, the lapse of friendly time, potent in assuaging the sorrows of mankind, the incessant

and most affectionate attentions of her numerous relatives, were rewarded by seeing an improvement, slight though it was. The presence of her little boy powerfully engaged her attention. She would have him lying beside her on the bed for hours together ; she spoke little to him, sleeping or waking ; but her eye was ever fixed upon his little features, and when she was asleep, her fingers would unconsciously wreath themselves amongst his flaxen curls. About Sir Henry she made little or no enquiry ; and when she did, we, of course, put the best face possible upon matters. Her frequent efforts to see and converse with him, had proved wofully and uniformly unsuccessful ; and she seemed henceforth to give up the idea of all interference, with despair.

But the original, the direful occasion of all this domestic calamity, must not be overlooked. The contest respecting the title and estates of Sir Henry went on as rapidly as the nature of the case would permit. The new claimant was, as I think I hinted before, a man of low station ; he had been, I believe, a sort of slave-driver, or factotum, on a planter's estate in one of the West India islands : and it was whispered that a rich Jew had been persuaded into such confidence in the man's prospects, as to advance him, from time to time, on his personal security, the considerable supplies necessary to prosecute his claims with effect.

There were very many matters of most essential consequence that no one could throw light upon but the unfortunate Baronet himself ; and his solicitor had consequently, in the hope of Sir Henry's recovery, succeeded in interposing innumerable obstacles, with the view, as well of wearing out his opponents, as affording every chance

for the restoration of his client's sanity. It was, I found, generally understood in the family, that the solicitor's expectations of success in the lawsuit were far from sanguine: not that he believed the new claimant to be the *bonâ fide* heir to the title, but he was in the hands of those who would ransack the world for evidence—and, when it was wanting, *make* it. Every imaginable source of delay, however—salvation to the one party, destruction to the other—was at length closed up; all preliminaries were arranged; the case was completed on both sides, and set down for trial. Considerable expectation was excited in the public mind; occasional paragraphs hinted the probability of such and such disclosures; and it was even rumoured that considerable bets were depending upon the issue.

I was in the habit of visiting Sir Henry once or twice a-week. He became again calm as before the occasion of his last dreadful outbreak; and his bodily health was complete. New delusions took possession of him. He was at one time composing a history of the whole world; at another, writing a memoir of every member that had ever sat in the House of Commons, together with several other magnificent undertakings. All, however, at length gave way to "The Pedigree, a Tale of Real Life," which consisted of a rambling, exaggerated account of his own lawsuit. It was occasioned by his happening, unfortunately, to cast his eye upon the following little paragraph in his newspaper, which chanced to have been most stupidly overlooked by the person who had been engaged for no other purpose than to read over the paper beforehand, and prevent any such allusions from meeting the eye of the sufferer.

"*Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart.*—This unfortunate gen-

tleman continues still greatly indisposed. We understand that little hope is entertained of his ultimate recovery. The result, therefore, of the approaching trial of 'Doe on the demise of Higgs v. Harleigh' will signify but little to the person principally interested."

From the moment of his reading these lines, he fell into a state of profound melancholy—which was, however, somewhat relieved by the task with which he had occupied himself, of recording his own misfortunes. He had resumed his former dress of green baize, as well as the intolerable peacock's feather. What could have conferred such a permanency upon, or suggested this preposterous *penchant*, I know not—except the interest he had formerly taken in a corps of riflemen, who were stationed near a house he had occupied in the country. He continued quiet and inoffensive. His keeper's office was little else than a sinecure—till Sir Henry suddenly set him about making two copies of every page he himself composed!

I remember calling upon him one morning about this time, and finding him pacing about his chamber in a very melancholy mood. He welcomed me with more than his usual cordiality; and dismissing his attendant, said, "Doctor, did you ever hear me speak in Parliament!" I told him I had not.

"Then you shall hear me now; and tell me candidly what sort of an advocate you think I should have made—for I have serious thoughts of turning my attention to the bar. I'll suppose myself addressing the jury on my own case—and you must represent the jury. Now!"—

He drew a chair and table towards a corner of the room—mounted on it, having thrown a cloak over his shoulders,

and commenced. Shall I be believed when I declare that—as far as my judgment goes—I listened on that occasion, for nearly an hour, to an *orator*? He spoke, of course, in the third person; and stated in a simple and most feeling manner, his birth, education, fortune, family, marriage—his Parliamentary career—in short, his happiness, prosperity, and pride. Then he represented the contemptuous indifference with which he treated the first communications concerning the attack meditated upon his title and property, as well as the consternation with which he subsequently discovered the formidable character of the claim set up against him. He begged me—the jury—to put myself in his place; to fancy his feelings; and proceeded to draw a masterly sketch of the facts of the case. He drew a lively picture of the secret misery he had endured—his agony lest his wife should hear of the disastrous intelligence—his sleepless nights and harassing days—the horrid apprehension of his adversary's triumph—the prospect of his own degradation—his wife—his child's beggary—till I protest he brought tears into my eyes. But, alas! at this point of his history, he mentioned his prodigious discovery of the mode of turning tallow into wax—and dashed off into an extravagant enumeration of the advantages of the speculation! Then, before me, stood confessed—**THE MADMAN**—violent and frantic in his gestures, haranguing me, in my own person, on the immense and incalculable wealth that would reward the projector; and had I not risen to go, he would probably have continued in the same strain for the remainder of the day! I had purposed calling that evening on Lady Anne—but I gave up the idea. The image of her insane husband would be too fresh in my mind. I felt I could not bear

to *see* her, and *think* of him. What a lot was mine—thus alternating visits between the diseased in mind, and the diseased in body—and that between husband and wife—over whom was besides impending the chance, if not probability, of total ruin! Oh, Providence—mysterious and awful in thy dispensations among the children of men!—who shall enquire into thy purposes, who question their wisdom or beneficence!

“Who sees not Providence supremely wise—
Alike in what it gives, and what denies!”*

My heart misgives me, however, that the reader will complain of being detained so long amongst these scenes of monotonous misery—I would I had those of a different character to present to him!—Let me therefore draw my long narrative to a close, by transcribing a few extracts from the later entries in my journal.

Saturday, November 5, 18——This was the day appointed for the trial of the important cause which was to decide the proprietorship of the title and possessions of Sir Henry Harleigh. Much interest was excited, and the court crowded at an early hour. Four of the most distinguished counsel at the bar had taken their seats, each with his ponderous load of papers and books before him, in the interest of Sir Henry, and three in that of his opponent. A special jury was sworn; the Judge took his seat; the cause was called on; the witnesses were summoned. The plaintiff's junior counsel rose to open the pleadings—after having paused for some time for the arrival of his client's attorney, who, while he was speaking,

at length made his appearance, excessively pale and agitated, hurriedly whispered to his leading counsel. The plaintiff had been found dead in his bed that morning—having been carried thither in a state of brutal intoxication, the preceding night, from a tavern-dinner with his attorney and witnesses. He died single, and there of course was an end of the whole matter that had been attended with such direful consequences to Sir Henry and his lady. But of what avail is the now established security of his title, rank, and fortune to their unhappy owner?—an outcast from society—from home—from family—from the wife of his bosom—even from himself! What signifies the splendid intelligence to Lady Anne—perishing under the pressure of her misfortunes? Will it not a thousandfold aggravate the agonies she is enduring?

It has been thought proper to intrust to *me* the difficult task of communicating the news to both parties, if I think it advisable that it should be done at all. What am I to do?—What may be the consequence of the secret's slipping out suddenly from any of those around Lady Anne? About the Baronet I had little apprehension; I felt satisfied that he could not comprehend it—that whether he had lost or won the suit was a matter of equal moment to *him*!

As I had a patient to visit this morning, whose residence was near Somerfield, I determined to take that opportunity of trying the effect of the intelligence on Sir Henry. It was about two o'clock when I called, and found him sitting by the fire, reading one of Shakspeare's plays. I gradually led his thoughts into a suitable train, and then told him, briefly, and pointedly, and accurately,

his own history—up to the latest incident of all—but as of a *third* person, and that a nobleman. He listened to the whole with profound interest.

“God bless me!” he exclaimed, with a thoughtful air, as I concluded—“I surely *must* have either heard or read of this story before!—You don’t mean to say that it is *fact*?—That it has happened lately?”

“Indeed I do, Sir Henry,” I replied, looking at him earnestly.

“And are the parties living?—Lord and Lady——?”

“Both of them—at this moment—and not ten miles from where we are now sitting!”

“Indeed!” he replied, musingly—“that’s unfortunate!”

“*Unfortunate*, Sir Henry!” I echoed with astonishment.

“Very—for *my* purpose. What do you suppose I have been thinking of all this while?” he replied, with a smile. “What a subject it would be for a tragedy!—But, of course, since the parties are living, it would never do!—Still I cannot help thinking that *something* might be made of it! One might disguise, and alter the facts.”

“It is a tragedy of *very* real life!” I exclaimed with a deep sigh.

“Indeed it is!” he replied, echoing my sigh—“it shows that fact often transcends all fiction—does it not? Now, if this had been the plot of a tale, or novel, people would have said—‘how improbable! how unnatural!’”

“Ay, indeed they would, Sir Henry,” said I, unable to keep the tears from my eyes.

“*’Tis* affecting,” he replied, his eyes glistening with

emotion; adding, after a moment's pause, in a somewhat tremulous tone—"Now, which of the two do you most pity, Doctor—Lord—or Lady Mary——?"

"Both. I scarce know which most."

"How did they bear the news, by the way, do you know?" he enquired with sudden interest.

"I believe Lady Mary—— is in too dangerous circumstances to be told of it. They say she is dying!"

"Poor creature! What a melancholy fate! And she is young and beautiful, you say?"

"She is young, but not now beautiful, Sir Henry!"

"I wish it had not been all *real*!" he replied, looking thoughtfully at the fire. "What would Shakspeare have made of it! It would have been a treasure to the writer of King Lear! And how, pray, did Lord—— receive the intelligence?—Stop," said he, suddenly,—“stop—How can one imagine *Shakspeare* to have drawn the scene? How would *he* have made Lord—— behave? Let me see—an ordinary writer could make the madman roar, and stamp, and rave—and perhaps be at length sobered with the news—would not he?"

"Very probably, Sir Henry," I replied faintly.

"Ah, very different, I imagine would be the delineation of that master painter! Possibly he would make the poor madman listen to it all, as to a tale of another person! He would represent him as charmed with the truth and nature of the invention—poor, poor wretch!—commiserating himself in another!—How profound the delusion!—How consummately true to nature!—How simple, but how wonderfully fine, would be the scene under SHAKSPEARE'S pencil!" continued Sir Henry, with

a sigh, folding his arms on his breast, leaning back in his chair, and looking thoughtfully into the fire.

"Why, you are equal to Shakspeare yourself, then, my dear Sir Henry."

"What!—what do you mean?" said he, starting and turning suddenly towards me with some excitement, rather pleasurable, however, than otherwise—"Have I, then"—

"You have described it EXACTLY as it happened!"

"No! Do you really say so? How do you know it, my dear Doctor?" said he, scarce able to sit in his chair, his countenance brightening with delight.

"Because I was present, Sir Henry; I communicated the intelligence," I replied, while every thing in the room seemed swimming round me.

"Good God, Doctor! Are you really in earnest?"

"As I live and breathe in the sight of God, Sir Henry," I replied, as solemnly as my thick, hurried voice would let me, fixing my eye keenly upon his. He gave a horrible start, and remained staring at me with an expression I cannot describe.

"Why—did you see that flash of lightning, Doctor?" he presently stammered, shaking from head to foot.

"Lightning, Sir Henry! Lightning!" I faltered, on the verge of shouting for his keeper.

"Oh—poh!" he exclaimed, with a long gasp, "I—I beg your pardon! How nervous you have made me! Ha, ha, ha!" attempting a laugh that mocked him with its faintness; but really you *do* tell me such horrid tales, and look so dreadfully expressive while you are telling them—that—that—upon my soul—I cannot bear it! Poh! how hot the room is! Let us throw open the win-

dow and let in fresh air!" He rose, and I with him. Thank God, he could not succeed, and I began to breathe freely again. He walked about fanning himself with his pocket-handkerchief. He attempted to smile at me, but it was in vain; he became paler and paler, his limbs seemed to stagger under him, and I had scarce time to drop him into a chair, before he fainted. I summoned his keeper to my assistance, and, with the ordinary means, we soon restored Sir Henry to consciousness.

"Ah! is that you?" he exclaimed, faintly smiling, as his eye fell upon the keeper. "I thought we had parted long ago! Why, where have you, or rather where have I been?"

At length, with the aid of a little wine and water, he recovered his self-possession.

"Heigh-ho! I shall be fit for nothing all the day, I am afraid! So I shall go and play at chess with the king. Is his majesty at liberty?"

My soul sunk within me; and seeing he was uneasy at my stay, I took my leave; but it was several hours before I quite recovered from the effects of perhaps the most agitating scene I ever encountered. I found it impossible to pay my promised visit to Lady Anne that evening. One such interview as the above is enough, not for a day, but a life; so I despatched a servant on horseback with a note, stating that I should call, if possible, the next evening.

Sunday, Nov. 6.—I determined to call upon Sir Henry to-day, to see the effect, if any, produced by our yesterday's conversation. He had just returned from hearing Dr Y—— read prayers, and was perfectly calm. There

was no alteration in his manner; and one of the earliest observations he made was, "Ah, Doctor, how you deceived me yesterday!—What could I be thinking of, not to know that you were repeating, in another shape, the leading incident in—absolutely!—ha, ha!—my own tale of 'The Pedigree!' 'Tis quite inconceivable how I could have forgotten it as you went on; but I have gained some valuable hints! I shall now get on with it rapidly, and have it at press as soon as possible. I hope it will be thought worthy by the world of the compliments you took occasion to pay me so delicately yesterday!"

I took my leave of him, in despair.

On reaching — Hall, in the evening, I found that the news, with the delivery of which I fancied myself specially and exclusively charged, had by some means or other found its way to her ladyship at an early hour in the afternoon of the preceding day. She had been but slightly agitated on hearing it; and the first words she murmured, were a prayer that the Almighty would make the intelligence the means of her husband's restoration to reason; but for herself, she expressed perfect resignation to the Divine will, and hope that the consolations of religion might not be withdrawn from her during the little interval that lay between her and hereafter. Surely that pure prayer, proceeding from the depths of a broken heart, through guileless lips, found favour with her merciful Maker. Surely it was *His* influence that diffused thenceforth serenity and peace through the chamber of the dying sufferer; that extracted the keen thorn of mental agony; that healed the broken spirit, while it gently dissolved the elements of life—kindling, amid the

decaying fabric of an earthly tabernacle, that light of faith and hope which shines

“ Most vigorous, when the body dies ! ”

Come hither for a moment, ye that doubt, or deny the existence of such an influence ; approach with awful steps this deathbed chamber of youth, beauty, rank—of all loveliness in womanhood, and dignity in station—hither ! and say, do you call THIS “ the deathbed of hope—the young spirit’s grave ? ” Who is it that hath rolled back from this sacred chamber-door the boisterous surges of this world’s disquietude, and “ bidden them that they come not near ? ”

It was true that Lady Anne was dying, and dying under bitter circumstances, as far as mere earthly considerations were concerned ; but was it hard to die surrounded by such an atmosphere of “ peace that passeth understanding ? ”

I found my sweet patient surrounded by her sisters, and one or two other ladies, and propped up with pillows in a sort of couch, drawn before the fire, whose strong light fell full upon her face, and showed me what havoc grief had made of her once beautiful features. She was then scarcely eight-and-twenty ; and yet you might have guessed her nearly forty ! The light with which her full eyes once sparkled had passed away, and left them sunk deep in the sockets, laden with the gloom of death. Her cheeks were hollow, and the deep bordering of her cap added to their wasted and shrunken appearance. One of her sisters—a very lovely woman—was sitting close beside her, and had always been considered her image ; alas, what a woful disparity was now visible !

Lady Sarah, my patient's youngest sister, was stooping down upon the floor, when I entered, in search of her sister's wedding-ring, which had fallen from a finger no longer capable of filling it. "You had better wind a little silk about it," whispered Lady Anne, as her sister was replacing it on the attenuated, alabaster-hued finger from which it had dropped. "I do not wish it ever to be removed again. Do it, love!" Her sister, in tears, nodded acquiescence, and left the room with the ring, while I seated myself in the chair she had quitted by her sister's side. I had time to ask only a few of the ordinary questions, when Lady Sarah reappeared at the door, very pale, and beckoned out one of her sisters to communicate the melancholy intelligence, that moment received, that their father, the old Earl, who had travelled up from Ireland, though in an infirm state of health, to see his dying daughter, at her earnest request,—had expired upon the road! In a few minutes, all present had, one by one, left the room, in obedience to similar signals at the door, and I was left alone with Lady Anne.

"Doctor," said she, calmly, "I am afraid something alarming has happened. See how they have hurried from the room! I observed Sarah, through that glass," said she, pointing me to a dressing-glass that stood so as to reflect whatever took place at the door. "Are *you* aware of any thing that has happened?" I solemnly assured her to the contrary. She sighed—but evinced not the slightest agitation.

"I hope they will tell me all; whatever it is, I thank God I believe I can bear it! But, Doctor," she pursued in the same calm tone, "whatever that may be, let me take this opportunity of asking you a question or two

about—Sir Henry. When did you see him?" I told her.

"Have you much hope of his case?"—I hesitated.

"Pray, Doctor, be frank with a dying woman!" said she, with solemnity. "Heaven will vouchsafe me strength to bear whatever you may have to tell me!—How is it?"

"I—I fear—that at present—at least, he is no *worse*, and certainly far more tranquil than formerly."

"Does he know of the event of Saturday? How did it affect him?"

"But little my lady. He did not seem quite to comprehend it." She shook her head slowly, and sighed.

"I hope your ladyship has received consolation from the intelligence?"

"Alas, what should it avail *me*! But there is my *child*. Thank God, he will not now be—a beggar! Heaven watch over his orphan years!" I thought a tear trembled in her eye, but it soon disappeared. "Doctor," she added, in a fainter tone even than before, for she was evidently greatly exhausted, "one word more! I am afraid my weakness has from time to time occasioned you much trouble—in the frequent attempts I have made to see my husband—my poor lost Henry!"—She paused for several seconds. "But the word is spoken from on high; I shall never see him again on this side the grave! I have written a letter to him, which I wish to be delivered to him after I shall be no more, provided—he be capable—of—of"—again she paused. "It is lying in my port-feuille below, and is sealed with black. It contains a lock of my hair, and I have written a few lines—but nothing that can pain him. Will you take the

charge of it?" I bowed in respectful acquiescence. She extended her wasted fingers towards me, in token of her satisfaction. I can give the reader, I feel, no adequate idea of the solemn, leisurely utterance with which all the above heart-breaking words were spoken. In her manner there was the profound composure of consciously approaching dissolution. She seemed beyond the reach of her former agitation of feeling—shielded, as it were, with a merciful apathy. I sat beside her, in silence, for about a quarter of an hour. Her eyes were closed, and I thought she was dozing. Presently one of her sisters, her eyes swollen with weeping, stepped softly into the room, and sat down beside her.

"Who is dead, love?" enquired Lady Anne, without opening her eyes. Her sister made no reply, and there was a pause. "He would have been here before this, but for"—muttered Lady Anne, breaking off abruptly. Still her sister made no reply. "Yes—I feel it; my father is dead!" exclaimed Lady Anne, adding, in a low tone, "if I had but strength to tell you of my dream last night! Call them all in—call them all in; and I will try, while I have strength," she continued, with more energy and distinctness than I had heard during the evening. Her eye opened suddenly, and settled upon her sister.

"Do not delay—call them all in to hear my dream!" Her sister, with a surprised and alarmed air, hastened to do her bidding.

"They imagine I do not see my father!" exclaimed Lady Anne, her eye glancing at me with sudden brightness. "There he is—he wishes to see his children around him, poor old man!" A faint and somewhat wild smile lit her pallid features for a moment. "I hear them on

the stairs—they must not find me thus. I am getting cold!" She suddenly rose from the couch on which she had been reclining, drew her dress about her, and to my great astonishment walked to the bed. Her maid that moment entered, and assisted in drawing the clothes over her. I followed, and begged her to be calm. Her pulse fluttered fast under my finger.

"I should not have hastened so much," said she, feebly, "but he is beckoning to me!" At this moment her sisters entered the room. "The lights are going out, and yet I see him!" she whispered, almost inarticulately. "Julia — Sarah — Elizabeth — Elizabeth — Eliza — El" — she murmured; her cold hand suddenly closed upon my fingers, and I saw that the brief struggle was over!

Her poor sisters, thus in one day doubly bereaved, were heart-broken. What a house of mourning was — Hall! I felt that my presence was oppressive. What could I do to alleviate grief so profound—to stanch wounds so recent! I therefore took my leave shortly after the decease of Lady Anne. As I was walking down the grand staircase, I was overtaken by the nursery-maid, carrying down the little orphan son of her ladyship.

"Well, my poor little boy," said I, stopping her, and patting the child on the cheek, "what brings you about so late as this?"

"Deed, sir," replied the woman, sobbing, "I don't know what has come to Master Harry to-night! He was well enough all day; but ever since seven o'clock, he's been so restless, that we didn't know what to do with him. He's now dozing and then waking; and his

little moans are very sad to hear. Hada't he better have some quieting physic, sir?"

The child looked, indeed, all she said. He turned from the light, and his little face was flushed and feverish.

"Has he asked after his mamma?"

"Yes, sir, often, poor dear thing! He wants to go to her; he says he will sleep with her to-night, or he won't go to bed at all," said the girl sobbing; "and we daren't tell him that—that—he's no mamma to go to any more!"

I thought of the FATHER—then of the son—then of the precious link between them that lay severed and broken in the chamber above; and with moist eyes and a quivering lip, kissed the child and left the Hall. It was a wretched November night. The scene without harmonized with the gloom within. The country all around was wrapped in a dreary winding-sheet of snow; the sleet came down without ceasing; and the wind moaned as it were a dirge for the dead! Alas for the dead! Alas for the early dead! The untimely dead!

Alas, alas, for the *living*!

Tuesday, Nov. 8th.—"On Sunday, the 6th November, at —— Hall, of rapid decline, Lady Anne, wife of Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart., and third daughter of the late Right Hon. the Earl of ——, whom she survived only one day."

Such was the record of my sweet patient's death that appeared in to-day's papers. Alas, of what a sum of woes are these brief entries often the exponents! How little does the eye that hastily scans them see of the

†ast accumulations of suffering which are there too frequently represented !

This entry was full before my eyes when I called to-day upon Sir Henry, who was busily engaged at billiards in the public room with Dr Y——. He played admirably, but was closely matched by the Doctor, and so eager in the game, that he had hardly time to ask me how I was. I stood by till he had proved the winner, and great was his exultation.

“I'll play you for a hundred pounds, Doctor!” said Sir Henry; “and give you a dozen !”

“Have you nothing to say to your friend, Dr ——?” replied Dr Y——, who knew that I had called for the purpose of attempting to make Sir Henry sensible of the death of Lady Anne.

“Oh, yes; I'll play with *him*; but before I lay odds, we must try our skill against one another. Come, Doctor,” extending the cue; “you shall begin !”

Of course I excused myself, and succeeded in enticing him to his own apartment, by mentioning his tale of the “Pedigree.”

“Ah, true,” said he, briskly; “I'm glad you've thought of it! I wish to talk a little to you on the subject.”

We were soon seated together before the fire, he with the manuscripts lying on his knee, and telling me the progress he had made since we had met.

“And what have you done with the *wife*?” said I, pointedly.

“Oh, Lady Mary? Why—let me see. By the way—in *your* version of *my* story, the other day—how did *you* dispose of her?” he enquired curiously, and with a smile!

I heaved a deep sigh. "God Almighty has disposed of her since then," said I, looking him full in the face. "He has taken her gentle spirit to himself; she has left a dreary world, Sir Henry!" He looked at me with a puzzled air.

"I can't for the life of me make you out, Doctor! What do you mean? What are you talking of? Whom are you confounding with *my* heroine? Some patient you have just left? Your wits are wool-gathering!"

"To be serious, Sir Henry," said I, putting my handkerchief to my eyes, "I *am* thinking of one who has but within this day or two ceased to be my patient! Believe me—believe me, my dear Sir Henry, her case—*very*—*closely* resembled the one you describe in your story! Oh, how sweet—how beautiful—how resigned!"

He made no reply, but seemed considering my words—as if with a reference to his own fiction.

"I can tell you, I think, something that will affect you, Sir Henry!" I continued.

"Ay! What is that? What is that?"

"She once knew *you*!"

"Knew me! What, intimately?"

"Very—VERY! She mentioned your name on her deathbed; she uttered a fervent prayer for you!"

"My God!" he exclaimed, removing his papers from his knee, and placing them on the table, and turning full towards me, that he might listen more attentively to me; "how astonishing! *Who* can it be?" he continued, putting his hand to his forehead—"Why, what was her name?"

I paused, and sickened at the contemplation of the

possible crisis. "I—I—perhaps—it might not be *prudent* to mention her name"—

"Oh, do! do!" he interrupted me eagerly,—“I know what you are afraid of; but—honour! Her name shall be safe with me! I cannot be base enough to talk of it!”

“Lady Anne Harleigh!” I uttered with a quivering lip.

“Po—po—poh!” he stammered, turning pale as ashes, and trembling violently, “What—wh—at do you mean? Are you talking about *my wife*?”

“Yes—your wife, my dear bereaved Sir Henry! But your little boy still lives to be a comfort to you!”

“—— the boy!” said he, uttering, or rather gasping a violent imprecation, continuing, in a swelling voice, his eye gleaming upon me, “You were talking about *my wife*!”

“For Heaven’s sake, be calm—be calm—be calm,” said I, rising.

“MY WIFE!” he continued exclaiming, not in the way of an enquiry, but simply *shouting* the words, while his face became transformed almost beyond recognition.

* * I shall, however, spare the reader the scene which followed. He got calm and pacified by the time I took my leave, for I had pledged myself to come and play a game at billiards with him on the morrow. On quitting the chamber, I entered the private room of Dr Y——; and while he was putting some questions to me about Sir Henry, he suddenly became inaudible—invisible, for I was fainting with excitement and agitation, occasioned by the scene I have alluded to. * *

“Depend upon it, my dear Doctor, you are mistaken,”

said Dr Y——, pursuing the conversation, shortly after I had recovered, “Sir Henry’s case is by no means hopeless—by no means !”

“I would I could think so ! If his madness has stood *two* such tremendous assaults with impunity, rely upon it it is impregnable. It will not be accessible by any inferior—nay, by *any* other means whatever.”

“Ah, quite otherwise—*experto crede !*” replied the quiet Doctor, helping himself to a glass of wine ; “the shocks you have alluded to have really, though invisibly, shaken the fortress ; and now we will try what *sapping*—*undermining*—will do—well followed out in figure, by the way, is it not ? But I’ll tell you a remarkable case of a former patient of mine, which is quite in point.”

“Pray, forgive me, my dear Doctor, pray excuse me at present. I really have no heart to listen to it ; I am, besides, all in arrear with my day’s work, for which I am quite, moreover, perfectly unfit, and will call again in a day or two.”

“*N’importe*—Be it so—’twill not lose by the keeping,” replied the Doctor, good-humouredly ; and shaking him by the hand, I hurried to my chariot, and drove off. Experience had certainly not *sharpened* the sensibilities of Dr Y—— !

[Bear with me, kind reader ! Suffer me to lay before you yet one or two brief concluding extracts from this mournful portion of my Diary. If your tears flow, if your feelings are touched, believe me it is not with romance—it is with the sorrows of actual life. “*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting ; for that is the end of all men—and the living will lay it to his heart.*”]

Nov. 9th to 14th inclusive.—Between these periods I called several times at Somerfield House, but saw little alteration in Sir Henry's deportment or pursuits, except that he was at times, I heard, very thoughtful, and had entirely laid aside his tale,—taking, in its place, to chess. He grew very intimate with the crazy gentleman before mentioned, who was imagined, both by himself and Sir Henry, to be the king. More than once the keeper warned Dr Y—— to interfere for the purpose of separating them, for he feared lest they should be secretly concerting some dangerous scheme or other. Dr Y—— watched them closely, but did not consider it necessary to interrupt their intercourse. I found Sir Henry, one evening, sitting with his friend the king, and their two keepers, very boisterous over their wine. Sir Henry staggered towards me, on my entry, singing snatches of a drinking-song, which were attempted to be echoed by his majesty, who was plainly far gone. I remonstrated with the keepers, full of indignation and alarm at their allowing two madmen the use of wine.

“Lord, Doctor,” said one of them, smiling, taking a decanter, and pouring out a glass of its contents, “taste it, and see how much it would take to intoxicate a man.”

I did—it was toast and water, of which the two lunatics had drunk several decanters, complaining all the while of their being allowed nothing but sherry! I need hardly add, that they had, in a manner, *talked*, and laughed, and sung themselves tipsy! Sir Henry, with a hiccup—whether real or affected I know not—insisted on my joining them, and told his majesty of the *hoax* I had lately been playing upon him, by “getting up” his *own* “tale,” and mystifying him by telling it to him of another. His majesty shouted with laughter.

Wednesday, Nov. 16.—This was the day appointed for the funeral of Lady Anne, which I was invited to attend. I set apart, therefore, a day for that melancholy, that sacred purpose. I was satisfied that no heavier heart could follow her to the grave than mine.

It was a fine frosty day. The sky was brightly, deeply blue, and the glorious sun was there, dazzling, but apparently not warming, the chilly earth. As I drove slowly down to the Hall, about noon, with what aching eyes did I see here a scarlet-jacketed huntsman, there a farmer at his work whistling ; while the cheery sparrows, fluttering about the bare twigs, and chirruping loudly, jarred upon my excited feelings, and brought tears into my eyes, as I recollected the words of the Scotch song,

“ Ye'll break my heart ye merry birds ! ”

In vain I strove to banish the hideous image of Sir Henry from my recollection—he seemed to stand gibbering over the corpse of his lady ! — Hall was a spacious building, and a blank desolate structure it looked from amidst the leafless trees—all its windows closed—nothing stirring about it but the black hearse, mourning coaches and carriages, with coachmen and servants in sable silk hat-bands. On descending and entering the Hall, I hastened out of the gloomy bustle of the undertaker's arrangements below, to the darkened drawing-room, which was filled with the distinguished relatives and friends of the deceased—a silent, mournful throng ! Well, it was not long before her remains, together with those of her father, the Earl of —, were deposited in the vault which held many members of their ancient family. I was not the only one whose feelings overpowered him during the ceremony, and unfitted me, in

some measure, for the duty which awaited me on my return, of ministering professionally to the heart-broken sisters. Swoons, hysterics, sobs, and sighs, did I move amongst during the remainder of the day!—Nearly all the attendants of the funeral left the Hall soon afterwards to the undisturbed dominion of solitude and sorrow: but I was prevailed upon by Lord ———, Lady Anne's eldest brother, to continue all night, as Lady Julia's continued agitation threatened serious consequences.

It was at a late hour that we separated for our respective chambers. That allotted to me had been the one formerly occupied by Sir Henry and his lady, and was a noble, but, to me, gloomy room. Though past one o'clock, I did not think of getting into bed, but trimmed my lamp, drew a chair to the table beside the fire, and having brought with me pen, ink, and paper, began writing, amongst other things, some of the memoranda, which are incorporated into this narrative, as I felt too excited to think of sleep. Thus had I been engaged for some twenty minutes or half an hour, when I laid down my pen to listen—for, unless my ears had deceived me, I heard the sound of soft music at a little distance. How solemn was the silence at that "witching hour!" Through the crimson curtains of the window, which I had partially drawn aside, was seen the moon, casting her lovely smiles upon the sleeping earth, all quiet as in her immediate presence. How tranquil was all before me, how mournful all within! The very room in which I was standing had been occupied, in happier times, by her whose remains had that day been deposited in their last cold resting-place! At length more dreary thoughts

—of Somerfield—of its wretched insensate tenant, flitted across my mind. I drew back again the curtain, and returning to the chair I had quitted, resumed my pen. Again, however, I heard the sound of music; I listened, and distinguished the tones of a voice, accompanied by a guitar, singing the melancholy air, “Charlie is my darling,” with much simplicity and pathos. I stepped again to the window, for the singer was evidently standing close before it. I gently drew aside a little of the curtain, and saw two figures, one at a little distance, the other very near the window. The latter was the minstrel, who stood exactly as a Spaniard is represented in such circumstances—a short cloak over his shoulders; and the colour fled from my cheeks, my eyes were almost blinded, for I perceived it was—Sir Henry, accompanied by the wretch whom he treated as “the king!” I stood staring at him unseen, as if transfixed, till he completed his song. He paused. “They all sleep sound,” he exclaimed with a sigh, looking up with a melancholy air at the windows—“Wake, lady-love, wake!” He began again to strike the strings of his guitar, and was commencing a gay air, when a window was opened overhead. He looked up suddenly—a faint shriek was heard from above—Sir Henry flung away his guitar, and, followed by his companion, sprung out of sight in a moment! Every one in the house was instantly roused. The shriek I had heard was that of Lady Elizabeth—the youngest sister of Lady Anne—who had recognised Sir Henry; and it was providential that I happened to be on the spot. Oh, what a dreadful scene ensued! Servants were sent out, as soon as they could be dressed, in all directions, in pursuit of the fugitives, who were not,

however, discovered till daybreak. Sir Henry's companion was then found, lurking under one of the arches of a neighbouring bridge, half-dead with cold; but he either could not, or would not, give any information respecting the Baronet. Two keepers arrived post at the Hall by seven o'clock, in search of the fugitives.

It was inconceivable how the madmen could have escaped. They had been very busy the preceding day whispering together in the garden, but had art enough to disarm any suspicion which that circumstance might excite, by a seeming quarrel. Each retired in apparent anger to his apartment; and when the keepers came to summon them to supper, both had disappeared. It was supposed that they had mounted some of the numerous coaches that traversed the road adjoining, and their destination, therefore, baffled conjecture.

Advertisements were issued in all directions, offering a large reward for the capture of Sir Henry—but with no success. No tidings were received of him for upwards of a week; when he one day suddenly made his appearance at the Hall, towards dusk, very pale and haggard—his dress in a wretched state—and demanded admission of a new porter, as the owner of the house. Enquiry was soon made, and he was recognised with a shriek by some of the female domestics. He was, really, no longer a lunatic—though he was believed such for several days. He gave, however, unequivocal evidence of his restoration to reason—but the grief and agony occasioned by discovering the death of his lady, threw him into a nervous fever, which left him, at the end of five months, “more dead than alive.” Had I not attended him throughout, I declare I could not have recognised Sir Henry Har-

leigh in the haggard, emaciated figure, closely muffled up from head to foot, and carried into an ample chariot-and-four, which was to convey him towards the Continent.

He never returned to England; but I often heard from him, and had the satisfaction of knowing that for several years he enjoyed tolerable health, though the prey of unceasing melancholy. The death of his son, however, which happened eight years after the period when the events above related occurred, was a voice from the grave, which he listened to with resignation. He died, and was buried in Italy, shortly after the publication of the first of these papers. I shall never forget that truly amiable, though unfortunate individual, whose extraordinary sufferings are here related under a disguise absolutely impenetrable to more than one or two living individuals. They will suffer the public to gather, undisturbed, the solemn instruction which I humbly hope and believe this narrative is calculated to afford, as a vivid and memorable illustration of that passage from Scripture already quoted, and with which, nevertheless, I conclude this melancholy history—*“And in my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled!”*

CHAPTER IV.

THE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

" Yet once more O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude;
And, with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due!
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime—
Young Lycidas!" *

Look, reader, once more with the eye and heart of sympathy, at a melancholy page in the book of human life—a sad one, indeed, and almost the last that will be opened by one who has laid several before you, and is about to take his departure!

It was pouring with rain one Wednesday, in the month of March, 18—, about twelve o'clock, and had been raining violently the whole morning. Only one patient had called upon me up to the hour just mentioned—for how could invalids stir out in such weather! The wind was cold and bitter—the aspect of things without, in short, most melancholy and cheerless. "There are one or two poor souls," thought I, with a sigh, as I stepped from the

* Milton—*Lycidas*.

desk at which I had been occupied for more than an hour writing, and stood looking over the blinds into the deserted and almost deluged streets—"there are one or two poor souls that would certainly have been here this morning, according to appointment, but for this unfriendly weather. Their cases are somewhat critical—one of them especially—and yet they are not such as to warrant my apprehending the worst. I wish, by the way, I had thought of asking their addresses!—Ah—for the future I will make a point of taking down the residence of such as I may suspect to be in very humble or embarrassed circumstances. One can then, if necessary, call upon such persons—on such a day as this—at their own houses. There's that poor man, for instance, the bricklayer—he cannot leave his work except at breakfast-time—I wonder how his sick child comes on! Poor fellow, how anxious he looked yesterday, when he asked me what I thought of his child! And his wife bed-ridden! Really I'd make a point of calling, if I knew where he lived! He can't afford a coach—that's out of the question. Well, it can't be helped, however!" With this exclamation, half-uttered, I looked at my watch, rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in a quarter of an hour. I was sealing one of the letters I had been writing, when I heard a knock at the street door, and in a few moments my servant showed a lady into the room. She was apparently about four or five-and-twenty; neatly but very plainly dressed; her features, despite an air of languor, as if from recent indisposition, without being strictly handsome, had a pleasing expression of frankness and spirit,—and her address was easy and elegant. She was, however, evidently flurried. She "hoped she should

not keep me at home—she could easily call again”—— I begged her to be seated ; and, in a quiet tone—at the same time proceeding with what I was engaged upon, that she might have a moment's interval in which to recover her self-possession—made some observations about the weather.

“It is still raining hard, I perceive,” said I ; “did you come on foot ? Bless me, madam, why you seem wet through ! Pray come nearer the fire”—stirring it up into a cheerful blaze—“can any of the servants offer you any assistance ? You look very chilly”——

“No, thank you, sir ; I am rather wet, certainly, but I am accustomed to be out in the rain—I will, however, sit closer to the fire, if you please, and tell you in a few words my errand. I shall not detain you long, sir,” she continued, in a tone considerably more assured ; “the fact is, I have received a letter this morning from a friend of mine in the country, a young lady, who is an invalid, and has written to request I would call immediately upon some experienced physician, and obtain, as far as can be, his real opinion upon her case—for she fancies, poor girl ! that they are concealing what is really the matter with her !”

“Well ! she must have stated her case remarkably well, ma'am,” said I with a smile, “to enable me to give any thing like a reasonable guess at her state without seeing her”——

“Oh—but I may be able to answer many of your questions, sir, for I am very well acquainted with her situation, and was a good deal with her, not long ago.”

“Ah—that's well. Then will you be so kind,” giving a monitory glance at my watch, “as to say what you

know of her case? The fact is, I've ordered the carriage to be here in about a quarter of an hour's time, and have a long day's work before me!"

"She is—let me see, sir—I should say about six years older than myself; that is, she is near thirty, or thereabouts. I should not think she was ever particularly strong. She's seen—poor thing!—a good deal of trouble lately." She sighed.

"Oh—I see, I understand! A little *disappointment*—*there's* the seat of the mischief, I suppose?" I interrupted, smiling, and placing my hand over my heart. "Isn't this really, now, the whole secret?"

"Why—the fact is—certainly, I believe—yes, I may say that love has had a good deal to do with her present illness—for it is *really* illness! She has been"—she paused, hesitated, and—as I fancied—coloured slightly—"crossed in love—yes! She was to have been—I mean—that is, she ought to have been married last autumn, but for this sad affair"— I bowed, looking again at my watch, and she went on more quickly to describe her friend as being naturally rather delicate—that this "disappointment" had occasioned her a great deal of annoyance and agitation—that it had left her now in a very low nervous way—and, in short, her friend suspected herself to be falling into a decline. That about two months ago she had had the misfortune to be run over by a chaise, the pole of which struck her on the right chest, and the horses' hoofs also trampled upon her, but no ribs were broken"—

"Ah, *this* is the most serious part of the story, ma'am, —this looks like real illness! Pray, proceed, ma'am. I suppose your friend after this complained of much pain

about the chest—is it so? Was there any spitting of blood?”

“ Yes, a little—no—I mean—let me see”—— here she took out of her pocket a letter, and unfolding it, cast her eye over it for a moment or two, as if to refresh her memory by looking at her friend's statement.

“ May I be allowed, ma'am, to look at the letter in which your friend describes her case ?” I enquired, holding out my hand.

“ There are some private matters contained in it, sir,” she replied quickly ; “ the fact is, there was some blood-spitting at the time, which I believe has not yet quite ceased.”

“ And does she complain of pain in the chest ?”

“ Yes—particularly in the right side.”

“ Is she often feverish at night and in the morning ?”

“ Yes—very—that is, her hands feel very hot, and she is restless and irritable.”

“ Is there any perspiration ?”

“ Occasionally a good deal—during the night.”

“ Any cough ?”

“ Yes, at times very troublesome, she says.”

“ Pray, how long has she had it ?—I mean, had she it before the accident you spoke of ?”

“ I first noticed it—let me see—ah, about a year after she was married.”

“ *After she was married !*” I echoed, darting a keen glance at her. She coloured violently, and stammered confusedly——

“ No, no, sir—I meant about a year after the time when she *expected* to have been married.”

There was something not a little curious and puzzling in all this. "Can you tell me, ma'am, what sort of a cough it is?" I enquired, shifting my chair, so that I might obtain a distincter view of her features. She perceived what I was about, I think—for she seemed to change colour a little, and to be on the verge of shedding tears. I repeated my question. She said that the cough was at first very slight; so slight that her friend had thought nothing of it, but at length it became a dry and painful one. She began to turn very pale; and a suspicion of the real state of the case flashed across my mind.

"Now, tell me, ma'am, candidly—confess! Are not you speaking of *yourself*? You really look ill!"

She trembled, but assured me emphatically that I was mistaken. She appeared about to put some question to me, when her voice failed her, and her eyes, wandering to the window, filled with tears.

"Forgive me, sir! I am so anxious about my friend,"—she sobbed—"she is a dear, kind, good"—her agitation increased.

"Calm—pray, calm yourself, ma'am—do not distress yourself unnecessarily! You must not let your friendly sympathies overcome you in this way, or you will be unable to serve your friend as you wish—as she has desired!"

I handed to her a bottle of smelling salts, and after pausing for a few moments, her agitation subsided.

"Well," she began again, tremulously, "what do you think of her case, sir? You may tell me candidly, sir,"—she was evidently making violent struggles to conceal her emotions—"for I assure you I will never make an

improper use of what you may say—indeed I will not!—What do you really think of her case?”

“Why—if all that you have said be correct, I own I fear it is rather a discouraging case—certainly, a bad case,” I replied, looking at her scrutinizingly. “You have mentioned some symptoms that are very unfavourable.”

“Do you—think—her case *hopeless*, sir?” she enquired in a feeble tone, and looking at me with sorrowful intensity.

“Why, that is a very difficult question to answer—in her absence. One ought to see her—to hear her tell her own story—to ask a thousand little questions that cannot be answered at second-hand. I suppose, by the way, that she is under the care of a regular professional man?”

“Yes, I believe so—no, I am not sure;—she *has* been, I believe.”

I now felt satisfied that she was speaking of herself. I paused, scarce knowing what to say. “Are her circumstances easy? Could she go to a warmer climate in the spring, or early part of the summer? I really think that change of scene would do her greater good than any thing I could prescribe for her.”

She sighed. “It might be so; but—I know it could not be done. Circumstances, I believe”——

“Is she living with her family? Could not *they*”——

“Oh no, there’s no hope *there*, sir!” she replied with sudden impetuosity. “No, no; they would see both of us perish before they would lift a finger to save us,” she added with increasing vehemence of tone and manner. “So now it’s all out—my poor, wretched husband!” She became very hysterical. The mystery was now dis-

pelled—it was her husband's case that she had been all the while enquiring about. I saw it all! Poor soul, to gain my candid, my *real* opinion, she had devised an artifice to the execution of which she was unequal; over-estimating her own strength, or rather not calculating upon the severe tests she would have to encounter.

Ring the bell, I summoned a female servant, who, with my wife (she had heard the sudden cries of my patient), instantly made her appearance, and paid all necessary attentions to the mysterious sufferer, as surely I might call her. The letter from which—in order to aid her little artifice—she had affected to read, had fallen upon the floor. It was merely a blank sheet of paper, folded in the shape of a letter, and directed in a lady's handwriting to “Mrs Elliott, No 5, — street.” This I put into my pocket-book. She had also, in falling, dropped a small piece of paper, evidently containing my intended fee, neatly folded up. This I slipped into the reticule which lay beside her.

From what scene of wretchedness had this unhappy lady come to me?

The zealous services of my wife and her maid presently restored my patient, at least to consciousness, and her first languid look was one of gratitude for their assistance. She then attempted, but in vain, to speak, and her tears flowed fast. “Indeed, indeed, sir, I am no impostor! and yet I own I have deceived you! but pity me! Have mercy on a being quite forsaken and broken-hearted! I meant to pay you your usual fee, sir, all the while. I only wished to get your true opinion about my unhappy husband. Oh how very, very, very wretched I am! what is to become of us! So my poor husband—there's no

hope! Oh that I had been content with ignorance of your fate!" She sobbed bitterly, and my worthy wife exhibited so little firmness and presence of mind, as she stood beside her suffering sister, that I found it necessary gently to remove her from the room. What a melancholy picture of grief was before me in Mrs Elliott—if that were her name. Her expressive features were flushed, and bedewed with weeping; her eyes swollen, and her dark hair, partially dishevelled, gave a wildness to her countenance, which added to the effect of her incoherent exclamations. "I do—I *do* thank you, sir, for your candour. I feel that you have told me the truth! But what is to become of us? My most dreadful fears are confirmed! But I ought to have been home before this, and am only keeping you"——

"Not at all, ma'am—pray don't"——

"But my husband, sir, is ill—and there is no one to keep the child but him. I ought to have been back long ago!" She rose feebly from her chair, hastily re-adjusted her hair, and replaced her bonnet, preparing to go. She seemed to miss something, and looked about the floor, obviously embarrassed at not discovering the object of her search.

"It is in your reticule, ma'am," I whispered—"and, unless you would affront and wound me, there let it remain. I know what you have been looking for—hush do not think of it again. My carriage is at the door,—shall I take you as far as —— street? I am driving past it."

"No, sir, I thank you; but—not for the world! My husband has no idea that I have been here; he thinks I have been only to the druggist. I would not have him

know of this visit on any account. He would instantly suspect all." She grew again excited. "Oh, what a wretch I am! How I must play the hypocrite! I must look happy, and say that I have hope when I am despairing,—and he dying daily before my eyes! Oh, how terrible will home be after this! But how long have I suspected it all!"

I succeeded, at length, in allaying her agitation, imploring her to strive to regain her self-possession before reappearing in the presence of her husband. She promised to contrive some excuse for summoning me shortly to see her husband, as if in the first instance,—as though it were the first time I had seen or heard of either of them; and assured me that she would call upon me again in a few days' time. "But, sir," she whispered, hesitatingly, as I accompanied her through the hall to the street door. "I am really afraid we cannot afford to trouble you often."

"Madam, you will greatly grieve and offend me if you ever allude to this again before I mention it to you. Indeed you will, ma'am," I added, peremptorily but kindly; and reiterating my injunctions, that she should let me soon see her, or hear from her again, I closed the door upon her, satisfied that ere long would be laid before me another dark page in the volume of human life.

Having been summoned to visit a patient somewhere in the neighbourhood of — street that evening,—and being on foot, it struck me, as it was beginning again to rain heavily, that if I were to step into some one of the little shops close by, I might be sheltered a while from the rain, and also possibly gain some information as to the character and circumstances of my morning visitor.

I pitched upon a small shop that was "licensed" to sell every thing, but especially groceries. The proprietor was a little lame old man, who was busy, as I entered, making up small packets of snuff and tobacco. He allowed the plea of the rain, and permitted me to sit down on the bench near the window. A couple of candles shed their dull light over the miscellaneous articles of minor merchandise with which the shop was stuffed. He looked like an old rat in his hoard!

He was civil and communicative, and I was not long in gaining the information I desired. He knew the Elliotts; they lived at number five, up two pair of stairs—but had not been there above three or four months. He thought Mr Elliott was "ailing"—and, for the matter of that, his wife didn't look the strongest woman in the world. "And pray what business, or calling, is he?" I enquired. The old man put his spectacles back upon his bald wrinkled head, and after musing a moment, replied, "Why, now, I can't take upon me to say, precisely like—but I think he's something in the city, in the mercantile line—at least I've got into my head that he *has* been such; but he also teaches music, and I know she sometimes takes in needle-work."

"Needle-work! does she indeed?" I echoed, taking her letter from my pocket-book, and looking at the beautiful—the fashionable hand in which the direction was written, and which, I felt confident, was her own.—"Ah!—then I suppose they're not over well to do in the world?"

"Why—you an't a-going to do any thing to them, sir, are you?—May I ask if you're a lawyer, sir?"

"No, indeed, I am not," said I with a smile—"nor is

this a writ! It's only the direction of a letter, I assure you; I feel a little interested about these people—at the same time, I don't know much about them, as you may perceive.—Were not you saying that you thought them in difficulties?"

"Why," he replied, somewhat re-assured—"maybe you're not far from the mark, in *that*, either. They deal here—and they pay me for what they have—but their custom an't very heavy! 'Deed they has uncommon little in the grocery way, but then they pays reg'lar—and that's better than them that has a good deal, and yet doesn't pay at all—an't it, sir?" I assented. "They used, when they first came here, to have six-and-sixpenny tea, and lump sugar; but this week or two back they've had only five-and-sixpenny tea, and moist sugar—but *my* five-and-sixpenny tea is an uncommon good article, and as good as many people's six shilling tea! only smell it, sir!" and whisking himself round, he briskly dislodged a japanned canister, and whipping off the lid, put a handful of the contents into it. The conclusion I arrived at was not a very favourable one—the stuff he had handed me seemed an abominable compound of raisin-stalks and sloe-leaves. "They're uncommon economical, sir," he continued, putting back again his precious commodity, "for they makes two or three ounces of this do for a week—unless they goes elsewhere, which I don't think they do, by the way—and I'm sure they oughtn't,—for, though I say it as shouldn't—they might go farther and fare worse, and without going a mile from here either—hem! By the way, Mrs Elliott was in here not an hour ago, for a moment, asking for some sago, because she said Mr Elliott had taken a fancy to have

some sago milk for his supper to-night—it was very unlucky, I hadn't half a handful left! So she was obliged to go to the druggist at the other end of the street. Poor thing, she looked so vexed—for she has quite a confidence, like, in what she gets here!"

"True!—very likely!—you said, by the way, you thought he taught music? what kind of music?"

"Why, sir, he's rather a good hand at the flute, his landlady says,—so he comes into me about a month since, and he says to me 'Bennet,' says he, 'may I direct letters for me to be left at your shop? I'm going to put an advertisement in the newspaper.'—'That,' says I, 'depends on what it's about—what are you advertising for? (not meaning to be rude, how's ever)—and he says, says he—'Why, I've taken it into my head, Mr Bennet, to teach the flute, and I'm a-going to try to get some one to learn it to.' So he put the advertisement in—but he didn't get more than one letter, and that brought him a young lad—but he didn't stay long. 'Twas a beautiful black flute, sir, with silver on it—for Mrs Hooper, his landlady—she's an old friend of my mistress, sir—showed it to us one Sunday, when we took a cup of tea with her, and the Elliotts was gone out for a walk.—I don't think he can teach it *now*, sir"—he continued, dropping his voice—"for, betwixt you and I, old Browning the pawnbroker, a little way up on the left hand side, has a flute in his window that's the very exact image of what Mrs Hooper showed us that night I was speaking of. You understand me, sir?—Pawned—or sold—I'll answer for it—a-hem!"

"Ah, very probable—yes, very likely!" I replied, sighing—hoping my gossiping host would go on.

"And betwixt you and I, sir," he resumed, "it wasn't a bad thing for him to get rid of it, either; for Mrs Hooper told us that Mr Elliott wasn't strong-like to play on it; and she used to hear Mrs Elliott (she is an uncommon agreeable young woman, sir, to look at, and looks like one that has been better off), I was a-saying, however, that Mrs Hooper used now and then to hear Mrs Elliott cry a good deal about his playing on the flute, and 'spostulate to him on the account of it, and say 'you know it isn't a good thing for you, dear.'—Nor was it, sir—the doctors would say!"

"Poor fellow"—I exclaimed, with a sigh, not meaning to interrupt my companion—"of all things on earth—the *flute*!"

"Ah!" replied the worthy grocer, "things *are* in a bad way when they come to that pass—arn't they! But Lord, sir!" dropping his voice, and giving a hurried glance towards a door, opening, I suppose, into his sitting-room—"there's nothing particular in *that*, after all. My mistress and I, even, have done such things before now, at a push, when we've been hard driven! You know, sir, poverty's no sin—is it?"

"God forbid, indeed, my worthy friend!" I replied, as a customer entered, to purchase a modicum of cheese or bacon: and thanking Mr Bennet for his civility in affording me so long a shelter, I quitted his shop. The rain continued, and, as is usually the case, no hackney-coach made its appearance till I was nearly wet through. My interest in poor Mrs Elliott and her husband was greatly increased by what I had heard from the gossiping grocer. How distinctly, though perhaps unconsciously, had he sketched the downward progress of respectable

poverty !—I should await the next visit of Mrs Elliott with some eagerness and anxiety. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before I again heard of Mrs Elliott, who called at my house one morning when I had been summoned to pay an early visit to a patient in the country. After having waited nearly an hour for me, she was obliged to leave, after writing the following lines on the back of an old letter.

“ Mrs Elliott begs to present her respects to Doctor —, and to inform him, that if quite convenient to him, she would feel favoured by his calling on Mr Elliott any time to-day or to-morrow. She begs to remind him of his promise, not to let Mr Elliott suppose that Mrs Elliott has told him any thing about Mr Elliott, except *generally* that he is poorly. The address is, No. 5, — street, near — square.”

About three o'clock that afternoon, I was at their lodgings in — street. No. 5, was a small decent draper's shop; and a young woman sitting at work behind the counter, referred me, on enquiring for Mr Elliott, to the private door, which she said I could easily push open—that the Elliots lived on the second floor—but she thought that Mrs Elliott had just gone out. Following her directions, I soon found myself ascending the narrow staircase. On approaching the second floor, the door of the apartment I took to be Mr Elliott's was standing nearly wide open; and the scene which presented itself I paused for a few moments to contemplate. Almost fronting the door, at a table, on which were several huge ledgers and account-books, sat a young man apparently about thirty, who seemed to have just dropped asleep over a wearisome task. His left hand supported

his head, and in his right was a pen which he seemed to have fallen asleep almost in the act of using. Propped up, on the table, between two huge books, a little towards his left-hand side, sate a child, seemingly a little boy, and a very pretty one, so engrossed with some plaything or another as not to perceive my approach. I *felt* that this was Mr Elliott, and stopped for a few seconds to observe him. His countenance was manly, and had plainly been once very handsome. It was now considerably emaciated, overspread with a sallow hue, and wore an expression of mingled pain and exhaustion. The thin white hand holding the pen, also bespoke the invalid. His hair was rather darker than his wife's—and being combed aside, left exposed to view an ample well-formed forehead. In short, he seemed a very interesting person. He was dressed in black, his coat being buttoned evidently for warmth's sake; for though it was March, and the weather very bleak and bitter, there was scarce any appearance of fire, in about the smallest grate I ever saw. The room was small, but very clean and comfortable, though not over-stocked with furniture—what there was being of the most ordinary kind. A little noise I made attracted, at length, the child's attention. It turned round, started on seeing a stranger, and disturbed its father, whose eyes looked suddenly but heavily at his child, and then at my approaching figure.

"Pray walk in," said he, with a kind of mechanical civility, but evidently not completely roused from sleep—"I—I—am very sorry—the accounts are not yet balanced,—very sorry—I have been at them almost the whole day"—He suddenly paused, and recollected.

himself. He had, it seems, mistaken me at the moment for some one whom he had expected.

"Dr —— ;" said I, bowing, and advancing.

"Oh ! I beg your pardon, sir—Pray walk in, and take a seat"—I did so.—"I believe Mrs Elliott called upon you this morning, sir ? I am sorry she has just stepped out, but she will return soon. She will be very sorry she was not at home when you called."

"I should have been happy to see Mrs Elliott,—but I understood from a few lines she left at my house, that this visit was to be paid to yourself—is it not so ? Can I be of any assistance ?"

"Certainly !" he replied, with a languid air, "I feel far from well, sir. I have been in but middling health for some time—but my wife thinks me, I am sure, much worse than I really am, and frets herself a good deal about me."

I proceeded to enquire fully into his case; and he showed very great intelligence and readiness in answering all my questions. He had, he said, detected in himself, some years ago, symptoms of a liver complaint, which a life of much confinement and anxiety had since contributed to aggravate. He mentioned the accident alluded to by Mrs Elliott ; and when he had concluded a very terse and intelligent statement of his case, I had formed a pretty decisive opinion upon it. I thought there was a strong tendency to hepatic phthisis, but that it might, with proper care, be arrested, if not even overcome. I expressed myself in very cautious terms.

"Do you really, candidly think, sir, that I have a reasonable chance of recovering my health?" he enquired,

with a sigh, at the same time folding in his arms his little boy, whose concerned features, fixed in silence—now upon his father, and then upon me—as each of us spoke, would almost have led me to imagine that he appreciated the grave import of our conversation.

“ Yes—I certainly think it probable—very probable—that you would recover, provided, as I said before, you used the means I pointed out.”

“ And the chief of those means are—relaxation, and country air ?”

“ Certainly.”

“ You consider them essential ?” he enquired, despondingly.

“ Undoubtedly. Repose, both bodily and mental—change of scene, fresh air, and *some* medical treatment”——

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on the floor, while an expression of profound melancholy overspread his countenance. He seemed absorbed in a painful reverie. I fancied that I could not mistake the subjects of his thoughts; and ventured to interrupt them, by saying in a low tone—“ It would not be *very* expensive, Mr Elliott, after all”——

“ Ah, sir—that is what I am thinking about,” he replied, with a deep sigh—and relapsed into his former troubled silence.

“ Suppose—suppose, sir, I were able to go into the country and rest a little, *a twelvemonth hence*, and in the mean time attend as much as possible to my health—is it probable that it would not *then* be too late ?”

“ Oh, come, Mr Elliott—let us prefer the sunshine to the cloud,” said I with a cheerful air, hearing a quick

step advancing to the door, which was opened, as I expected, by Mrs Elliott, who entered breathless with haste.

"How do you do, ma'am—Mrs Elliott, I presume?" said I, wishing to put her on her guard, and prevent her appearing to have seen me before.

"Yes, sir—Mrs Elliott," said she, catching the hint—and then turning quickly to her husband, "how are you, love? I hope Henry has been good with you!"

"Very—he's been a very good little boy," replied Elliott, surrendering him to Mrs Elliott, whom he was struggling to reach.

"But how are you, dear?" repeated his wife, anxiously.

"Pretty well," he replied, adding with a faint smile, at the same time pushing his foot against mine, under the table—"As you would have Dr —, he is here; but we can't make out why you thought fit to summon him in such haste."

"A very little suffices to alarm a lady," said I, with a smile. "I was sorry, Mrs Elliott, that you had to wait so long for me this morning—I hope it did not inconvenience you?"—I began to think how I should manage to decline the fee I perceived they were preparing to give me, for I was obliged to leave, and drew on my gloves. "We've had a long *tête-à-tête*, Mrs Elliott, in your absence. I must commit him to your gentle care—you will prove the better physician. He must submit to you in every thing; you must not allow him to exert himself too much over matters like these," pointing to the huge folios lying upon the table—"he must keep regular hours—and if you could all of you go to lodgings on the outskirts of the town, the fresh air would do all of you

a world of good. You must undertake the case, ma'am—you must really pledge yourself to this"—the poor couple exchanged hurried glances, in silence. *He* attempted a smile. "What a sweet little fellow is this," said I, taking their little child into my arms—a miracle of neatness and cleanliness—and affecting to be eagerly engaged with him. He came to me readily, and forthwith began an incomprehensible address to me about "Da—da"—"pa—pa"—"ma—ma," and other similarly mysterious terms, which I was obliged to cut short by promising to come and talk again with him in a day or two. "Good day, Master Elliott!" said I, giving him back to his father, who at the same time slipped a guinea in my hand. I took it easily. "Come, sirrah," said I, addressing the child—"will you be my banker?" shutting his little fingers on the guinea.

"Pardon me—excuse me, Doctor," interrupted Mr Elliott, blushing scarlet, "this must not be. I really cannot"—

"Ah! may I not employ what banker I like?—Well—I'll hear what you have to say about it when we meet again.—Farewell for a day or two,"—and with these words, bowing hastily to Mrs Elliott, who looked at me, through her tear-filled eyes, unutterable things, I hurried down stairs. It may seem sufficiently absurd to dwell so long upon the insignificant circumstance of declining a fee—a thing done by my brethren daily—often as a matter of course—but it is a matter that has often occasioned me no inconsiderable embarrassment. 'Tis really often a difficult thing to refuse a fee proffered by those one knows to be unable to afford it, so as not to make them feel uneasy under the sense of an obligation—to wound

delicacy, or offend an honourable pride. I had, only a few days before, by the way, almost *asked* for my guinea from a gentleman worth many thousands a-year, and who dropped the fee into my hand as though it were some of his heart's blood.

I had felt much gratified with the appearance and manners of Mr and Mrs Elliott, and disposed to cultivate their acquaintance. Both were evidently oppressed with melancholy, which was not, however, sufficient to prevent my observing the simplicity and manliness of the husband, the sweetness and frankness of the wife. How her eyes devoured him with fond anxiety! Often, while conversing with them, a recollection of some of the touching little details communicated by their garrulous grocer brought the tears for an instant to my eyes. Possibly poor Mrs Elliott had been absent, either seeking employment for her needle, or taking home what she had been engaged upon—both of them thus labouring to support themselves by means to which *she*, at least, seemed utterly unaccustomed, as far as one could judge from her demeanour and conversation. Had they pressed me much longer about accepting my fee, I am sure I should have acted foolishly; for when I held their guinea in my hand, the thoughts of their weekly allowance of an ounce or two of tea—their brown sugar—his pawned flute—almost determined me to defy all delicacy, and return them their guinea doubled. I could enter into every feeling, I thought, which agitated their hearts, and appreciate the despondency, the hopelessness with which they listened to my mention of the indispensable necessity of change of scene and repose. Probably, while I was returning home, they were mingling bitter tears as they owned to

one another the impossibility of adopting my suggestions; he feeling and she fearing—neither, however, daring to express it—that his days were numbered—that he must toil to the last for a scanty livelihood—and even then leave his wife and child, it seemed but too probable, destitute—that, in the sorrowful language of Burns,

“ Still caring, despairing
Must be his bitter doom ;
His woes here, will close se’er
But with the closing tomb.”*

I felt sure that there was some secret and grievous source of misery in the background, and often thought of the expressions she had frantically uttered when at my house. Had either of them married against the wishes of a proud and unrelenting family? Little did I think that I had on that very day which first brought me acquainted with Mrs Elliott, paid a professional visit to one fearfully implicated in the infliction of their present sufferings !—But I anticipate.

I need not particularize the steps by which I became at length familiarly acquainted with Mr and Mrs Elliott. I found them for a long while extremely reserved on the subject of their circumstances, except as far as an acknowledgment that their pecuniary resources were somewhat precarious. He was, or rather, it seemed, had been, a clerk in a merchant's counting-house; but ill health obliged him at length to quit his situation, and seek for such occasional employment as would admit of being attended to at his own lodgings. His labours in this way were, I perceived, notwithstanding my injunctions and

* *Despondency*, an Ode.

his promises, of the most intense and unremitting, and, I feared, ill-requited description. But with what heart could I continue my remonstrances, when I felt convinced that thus he must toil, or starve? She also was forced to contribute her efforts towards their support, as I often saw her eagerly and rapidly engaged upon dresses and other articles too splendid to be for her own use. I could not help, one day, in the fulness of my heart, seeing her thus engaged, telling her that I had in early days since my marriage seen my wife similarly engaged. She looked at me with surprise for a few moments, and burst into tears. She forced off her rising emotions; but she was from that moment aware that I fully saw and appreciated her situation. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that she and her husband were at length induced to tell me their little history; and before giving the reader an account of what fell under my own personal observation, I shall lay before him, in my own way, the substance of several painfully interesting conversations with this most unfortunate couple. Let not the ordinary reader spurn details of everyday life, such as will here follow;

“Nor *grandeur* hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor!”

Owing to a terrible domestic calamity, it became necessary that Henry Elliott, an only son, educating at Oxford, and destined for the army, should suddenly quit the University, and seek a livelihood by his own exertions in London. The event which occasioned this sudden blight to his prospects, was the suicide of his father, Major Elliott; whose addiction to gambling, having for a long time seriously embarrassed his affairs, and nearly

broken the heart of his wife, at length led him to commit the fatal act above spoken of. His widow survived the shock scarce a twelvemonth, and her unfortunate son was then left alone in the world, and almost entirely destitute. The trifling sum of ready money which remained in his possession after burying his mother was exhausted, and the scanty pittance afforded by relatives, withdrawn, on the ground that he ought now to support himself, when his occasional enquiries after a situation at length led to the information that there was a vacancy for an outer-clerk in the great house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane, in the city. He succeeded in satisfying the junior partner, after submitting to sundry humiliating enquiries, of his respectability and trustworthiness; and he was forthwith received into the establishment, at a salary of £60 per annum.

It was a sad day for poor Elliott when he sold off almost all his college books, and a few other remnants of gay and happy days, gone by probably for ever, for the purpose of equipping himself becomingly for his new and humble functions. He wrote an excellent hand; and being of a decided mathematical turn, the arithmetic of the counting-house was easily mastered. What dismal drudgery had he henceforth daily to undergo! The tyranny of the upper clerks reminded him, with a pang, of the petty tyranny he had both experienced and inflicted at the public school, where he had been educated. How infinitely more galling and intolerable was his present bondage! Two-thirds of the day he was kept constantly on foot, hurrying from place to place, with bills, letters, &c. and on other errands; and—especially on the foreign post nights—he was detained slaving sometimes till nine or ten o'clock at night,

copying letters, and assisting in making entries and balancing accounts, till his pen almost dropped from his wearied fingers. He was allowed an hour in the middle of the day for dinner—and even this little interval was often broken in upon to such an extent as proved seriously prejudicial to his health. After all the labours of the day, he had to trudge from Mincing Lane, along the odious City Road up to almost the extremity of Islington, where were situated his lodgings—i. e. a little back bedroom, on the third floor, serving at once for his sitting and sleeping room, and for the use of which he paid at the rate of seven shillings a-week, exclusive of extras. Still he conformed to his cheerless lot, calmly and resolutely—with a true practical stoicism that did him honour. His regular and frugal habits enabled him to subsist upon his scanty salary with decency, if not comfort, and without running into debt—that infallible destructive of all peace of mind and self-respect! His sole enjoyment was an occasional hour in the evening, spent in reading, and retracing some of his faded acquisitions in mathematics. Though a few of his associates were piqued at what they considered his sullen and inhospitable disposition, yet his obliging manners, his easy but melancholy deportment, his punctuality and exactitude in all his engagements, soon gained him the good-will of his brethren in the office, and occasionally even an indication of satisfaction on the part of some one of his august employers. Thus, at length, Elliott overcame the numerous *desagrémens* of his altered situation, seeking in constant employment to forget both the gloom and gaieties of the past. Two or three years passed over, Elliott continuing thus steadily in his course; and his salary, as

a proof of the approbation of his employers, had been annually increased by £10 till he was placed in comparative affluence by the receipt of a salary of £90. His severe exertions, however, insensibly impaired a constitution, never very vigorous, and he bore with many a fit of indisposition, rather than incur the expense of medical attendance. It may be added, that Elliott was a man of gentlemanly exterior, and engaging deportment—and then let us pass to a very different person.

Mr Hillary, the head of the firm, a man of very great wealth, had risen from being a mere errand-boy, to his present eminence in the mercantile world, through a rare combination of good fortune with personal merit—*merit*, as far as concerns a talent for business, joined with prudence and enterprise. If ever there came a man within the terms of Burke's famous philippic, it was Mr Hillary. His only object was money-making; he knew nothing, cared for nothing beyond it; till the constant contemplation of his splendid gains, led his desires into the train of personal aggrandisement. With the instinctive propensities of a low and coarse mind, he became as tyrannical and insolent in success, as in adversity he had been mean and abject. No spark of generous or worthy feeling had, indeed, ever been struck from the flinty heart of Jacob Hillary, of the firm of Hillary, Hungate, and Company!—He was the idol of a constant throng of wealth-worshippers; to every body else, he was an object either of contempt or terror. He had married the widow of a deceased partner, by whom he had had several children, of whom one only lived beyond infancy; a generous, high-spirited, enthusiastic girl, whom her purse-proud father had destined, in his own weak and vain ambition,

to become the wearer of a coronet. On this dazzling object were Mr Hillary's eyes fixed with unwavering earnestness; he desired and longed to pour the tide of his gold through the channel of a peerage. In person, Mr Hillary was of the middle size, but gross and corpulent. There was no intellect in his shining bald head, fringed with bristling white hair—nor was there any expression in his harsh and coarse features but such as faithfully adumbrated his character as above described.

This was the individual, who, in stepping one morning rather hastily from his carriage, at his counting-house door in Mincing Lane, fell from the carriage step, most severely injuring his right ankle and shoulder. The injuries he received upon this occasion kept him confined for a long period to his bed, and for a still longer to an easy-chair, in the back drawing-room of his spacious mansion near Highbury. As soon as he was able to attend to business, he issued orders that as Elliott was the clerk whose residence was nearest to Bullion House, he should attend him every morning for an hour or two on matters of business, carrying Mr Hillary's orders to the City, and especially bringing him day by day, in a sealed envelope, *his banker's book*! A harassing post this proved for poor Elliott. Severe discipline had trained his temper to bear more than most men; and on these occasions it was tried to the uttermost. Mr Hillary's active and energetic mind, kept thus in comparative and compulsory seclusion from the only concerns he cared for, or that could occupy it—always excepting the one great matter already alluded to—his imperious and irritable temper became almost intolerable. Elliott would certainly have thrown up his employment under Mr

Hillary in disgust and despair, had it not been for one circumstance—the presence of Miss Hillary—whose sweet appealing looks day after day melted away the resolution with which Elliott every morning came before her choleric and overbearing father, although they could not mitigate that father's evil temper, or prevent its manifestations. He insisted on her spending the greater part of every day in his presence, nor would allow her to quit it even at the periods when Elliott made his appearance. The first casual and hasty glance that he directed towards her, satisfied him that he had, in earlier and happy days, been several times in general society with her—her partner even in the dance. *Now*, however, he dared not venture to exhibit the slightest indication of recognition; and she, if struck by similar recollections, thought fit to conceal them, and behave precisely as though she then saw and heard of Mr Elliott for the first time in her life. He could not, of course, find fault with her for this; but he felt it deeply and bitterly. He little knew how much he wronged her! She instantly recollected him—and it was only the dread of her father that restrained her from a friendly greeting. Having once adopted such a line of conduct, it became necessary to adhere to it—and she did. But could she prevent her *heart* going out in sympathy towards the poor, friendless, unoffending clerk whom her father treated more like a mere menial, than a respectable and confidential servant—him whom she knew to be

“ Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate ?”

Every day that she saw him, her woman's heart throbbed with pity towards him; and pity is indeed akin to love.

How favourably for him did his temper and demeanour contrast, in *her* eyes, with those of her father!—And she saw him placed daily in a situation calculated to exhibit his real character—his disposition, whether for good or evil. The fact was, that he had become an object of deep interest—even of love—to her, long before the thought had ever occurred to him that she viewed him, from day to day, with feelings different from those with which she would look at the servant that stood at her father's sideboard, at dinner. His mind was kept constantly occupied by his impetuous employer, and his hundred questions about every thing that had or had not happened every day in the City. Thus for nearly three months had these unconscious lovers been brought daily for an hour or two into each other's presence. He had little idea of the exquisite pain occasioned Miss Hillary by her father's harsh and unfeeling treatment of him, nor of the many timid attempts she made, in his absence, to prevent the recurrence of such treatment; and as for the great man, Mr Hillary, it never crossed his mind as being possible that two young hearts could by any means, when in different stations of society, one rich, the other poor, be warmed into a feeling of regard, and even love for one another.

One afternoon Elliott was obliged to come a second time that day from the City, bearing important despatches from Mincing Lane to Mr Hillary, who was sitting in his invalid chair, flanked on one hand by his daughter, and on the other by a little table on which stood wine and fruit. Poor Elliott looked, as well he might, exhausted with his long and rapid walk through the fervid sunshine.

"Well, sir—what now?" said her father quickly and peremptorily, at the same time eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive a letter which Elliott had presented to him.

"Humph! Sit down there, sir, for a few minutes!" Elliott obeyed. Miss Hillary, who had been reading, touched with Elliott's pale and wearied look, whispered to her father—"Papa—Mr Elliott looks dreadfully tired—may I offer him a glass of wine?"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr Hillary, hastily, without removing his eyes from the letter he had that instant opened. Miss Hillary instantly poured out a glass of wine; and as Elliott approached to take it from the table, with a respectful bow, his eye encountered hers, which was instantly withdrawn—but not before it had cast a glance upon him, that electrified him; that fell suddenly like a spark of fire amid the combustible feelings of a most susceptible but subdued heart. It fixed the fate of their lives. The train so long laid had been at length unexpectedly ignited, and the confounded clerk returned, or rather staggered towards his chair, fancying that every thing in the room was whirling around him. It was well for both of them that Mr Hillary was at that eventful moment absorbingly engaged with a letter announcing the sudden arrival of three ships with large cargoes of an article of which he had been attempting a monopoly, and in doing so had sunk a very large sum of ready money. In vain did the conscious and confused girl—confused as Elliott—remove her chair to the window, with her back turned towards him, and attempt to proceed with the book she had been reading. Her head seemed in a whirlpool.

"Get me my desk, Mary, immediately," said her father, suddenly.

"No, indeed, papa, you didn't," replied Miss Hillary, as suddenly, for her father's voice had recalled her from a strange reverie.

"My desk, Mary—my desk, d'ye hear?" repeated her father, in a peremptory manner, still conning over the letter which told him, in effect, that he would return to bed that night four or five thousand pounds poorer than he had risen from it—ignorant, however, that within the last few moments, in his very presence, had happened that which was to put an end for ever to all his vain and gaudy dreams of a coronet glittering upon his daughter's brow!

Miss Hillary obeyed her father's second orders, carefully looking in every direction save that in which she would have encountered Elliott; and whispering a word or two into her father's ear, quitted the room. Elliott's heart was beating quickly when the harsh tones of Mr Hillary, who had worked himself into a very violent humour, fell upon his ear, directing him to return immediately to the City, and say he had no answer to send till the morning, when he was to be in attendance at an early hour.

Scarce knowing whether he stood on his head or his heels, Elliott hurriedly bowed, and withdrew. Borne along on the current of his tumultuous emotions, he seemed to fly down the swarming City Road; and when he reached the dull dingy little back counting-house where he was to be occupied till a late hour of the night, he found himself not in the fittest humour in the world for his task. *Could* he possibly be mistaken in interpreting

Miss Hillary's look? Was it not corroborated by her subsequent conduct? And—by the way—now that he came to glance backwards into the two or three months during which he had been almost daily in her presence,—divers little incidents started up into his recollection, all tending the same way. “Heigh-ho!” exclaimed Elliott, laying down his yet unused pen, after a long and bewildering reverie—“I wonder what Miss Hillary is thinking about! Surely I have had a kind of day-dream! It *can't* have really happened! And yet—how could there have been a mistake? Heaven knows I had taken nothing to excite or disorder me—except, perhaps, my long walk! Here's a *coup de soleil*, by the way, with a witness! But only to think of it—Miss Hillary—daughter of Jacob Hillary, Esq.—in love with—an under-clerk of her father—poh! it will never do! I'll think of it to-morrow morning.” Thus communed Elliott with himself, by turns writing, pausing, and soliloquizing, till the lateness of the hour compelled him to apply to his task in good earnest. He did not quit his desk till it had struck ten; from which period till that at which he tumbled into his little bed, he fancied that scarcely five minutes had elapsed.

He made his appearance at Bullion House the next morning with a sad fluttering about the heart, but it soon subsided, for Miss Hillary was not present to prolong his agitation. He had not been seated for many minutes, however, before he observed her in a distant part of the gardens, apparently tending some flowers. As his eye followed the movements of her graceful figure, he could not avoid a faint sigh of regret at his own absurdity in raising such a superstructure of splendid possibilities un-

on so slight a foundation. His attention was at that instant arrested by Mr Hillary's multifarious commands for the City: and, in short, Miss Hillary's absence from town for about a week, added to a great increase of business at the counting-house, owing to an extensive failure of a foreign correspondent, gradually restored Elliott to his senses, and banished the intrusive image of his lovely tormentor. Her unequivocal exhibition of feeling, however—unequivocal at least *to him*—on the occasion of the next meeting, instantly revived all his former excitement, and plunged him afresh into the soft tumult of doubts, hopes, and fears, from which he had so lately emerged. Every day that he returned to Mr Hillary's brought him fresh evidence of the extent to which he had encroached upon Miss Hillary's affections; and strange indeed must be that heart which, feeling itself alone and despised in the world, can suddenly find itself the object of a most enthusiastic and disinterested attachment, without kindling into a flame of grateful affection. Was there any thing wonderful or improbable in the conduct here attributed to Miss Hillary? No. A girl of frank and generous feeling, she saw in one, whom undeserved misfortune had placed in a very painful and trying position, the constant exhibition of the best qualities of human nature; a patient and dignified submission to her father's cruel and oppressive treatment—a submission, perhaps, *on her account*; she beheld his high feeling conquering misfortune; she saw in his eye—his every look—his whole demeanour, susceptibilities of a higher description than befitted such a situation as his present one:—and beyond all this—last, though not least, as

Elliott acted the gentleman, so he *looked* it—and a gentleman not particularly plain or unprepossessing either.

So it came to pass, then, that these two hearts became acquainted with each other, despite the obstacles of circumstance and situation. A kind of telegraphing courtship was carried on between them daily, which must have been observed by Mr Hillary, but for the engrossing interest with which he regarded the communications of which Elliott was always the bearer. Mr Hillary began, however, at length to recover the use of his limbs, and rapidly to gain general strength. He consequently announced one morning to Elliott—his sentence of banishment from Paradise—that he should not require him to call after the morrow. At this time the lovers had never interchanged a syllable together, either verbal or written, that could savour of love; and yet each was as confident of the state of the other's feelings, as though a hundred closely written, and closer crossed letters had been passing between them. On the dreaded morrow he was pale and somewhat confused, nor was she far otherwise—but she had sufficient means of accounting for it, if required to do so, in the indisposition of her mother, who had for many months been a bed-ridden invalid. As for Elliott he was safe. He might have appeared at death's door, without attracting the notice, or exciting the enquiries of his callous employer. As he rose to leave the room, Elliott bowed to Mr Hillary—but his last glance was directed towards Miss Hillary—who, however, at that moment was, or appeared to be, too busily occupied with pouring out her exemplary father's coffee, to pay any attention to her retiring lover, who consequently quitted her presence not a little piqued and alarmed.

They had no opportunity of seeing one another till nearly a month after the occasion just alluded to ; when they met under circumstances very favourable for the expression of such feelings as either of them dared to acknowledge—and the opportunity was not thrown away. Mr Hillary had quitted town for the north, on urgent business, which was expected to detain him for nearly a fortnight ; and Elliott failed not, on the following Sunday, to be at the post he had constantly occupied for some months—namely, a seat in the gallery of the church attended by Mr Hillary and his family, commanding a distant view of the great central pew—matted, hassocked, and velvet-cushioned, with a rich array of splendid implements of devotion, in the shape of Bibles and prayer-books, great and small, with gilt edges, and in blue and red morocco—being the favoured spot occupied by the great merchant, where he was pleased, by his presence, to assure the admiring vicar of his respect for him—and the established church. Miss Hillary had long since been aware of the presence of her timid and distant lover on these occasions ; they had several times nearly jostled against one another in going out of church, the consequence of which was generally a civil though silent recognition of him. And this might be done with impunity, seeing how her magnificent father was occupied with nodding to every body, genteel enough to be so publicly recognised, and shaking hands with the select few who enjoyed the distinction of his personal acquaintance. With what a different air and with what a different feeling did the great merchant and his humble clerk pass on these occasions down the aisle !—But to return. On the Sunday above alluded to, Elliott, with a fluttering heart,

beheld Miss Hillary enter the church alone, and become the solitary tenant of the family pew. Sad truants from his prayer-book, his eyes never quitted its fair and solitary occupant. But she chose, in some wayward humour, to sit that morning with her back turned towards the part of the church where she must have known Elliott to be, and never once looked up in that direction. They met, however, after the service, near the door, as usual; she dropped her black veil just in time to prevent his observing a certain sudden flush that forced itself upon her features; returned his modest bow; a few words of course were interchanged; it threatened—or Elliott chose to represent that it threatened, to rain (which he heartily wished it would, as she had come on foot, and unattended): and so, in short, it came to pass that this very discreet couple were to be seen absolutely walking arm in arm towards Bullion House, at the slowest possible pace, and by the most circuitous route that could suggest itself to the flurried mind of Elliot. An instinctive sense of propriety, or rather prudence, led him to quit her arm just before arriving at that turn of the road which brought them full in sight of her father's house. There they parted—each satisfied as to the nature of the other's feelings, though, however, nothing had then passed between them of an explicit or decisive character.

It is not necessary for me to dwell on this part of their history. Where there is a will, it is said, there is a way; and the young and venturous couple found, before long, an opportunity of declaring to each other their mutual feelings. Their meetings and correspondence were contrived and carried on with the utmost difficulty. Great caution and secrecy were necessary to conceal the affair

from Mr Hillary, and those whose interest it was to give him early information on every matter that in any way concerned him. Miss Hillary buoyed herself up with the hope of securing, in due time, her mother, and obtaining her intercessions with her stern and callous-hearted father.

Some three months or thereabouts, after the Sunday just mentioned, Mr Hillary returned from the City, and made his appearance at dinner, in an unusually brisk and lively humour. Miss Hillary was at a loss to conjecture the occasion of such an exhibition; but imagined it must be some great speculation of his which had proved eminently successful. He occasionally directed towards her a kind of grim leer, as though longing to communicate tidings which he expected to be as gratifying to her, as they were to himself. They dined alone; and as she was retiring rather earlier than usual, in order to attend upon her mother, who had that day been more than ordinarily indisposed, he motioned her to resume her seat.

"Well, Molly"—for that was the elegant version of her Christian name which he generally adopted when in a good humour—"Well, Molly," pouring out a glass of wine, as the servants made their final exit, "I have heard something, to-day, in the City—a-hem! in which *you* are particularly concerned—very much so—and—so—a-hem! am I!" He tossed off half of his glass, and smacked his lips, as though he unusually relished the flavour.

"Indeed! papa," exclaimed the young lady, with an air of anxious vivacity, not attempting to convey to her lips the brimming wine glass her father had filled for her, lest the trembling of her hand should be observed by him—

"Oh, you are joking! what can I have to do with the City, papa?"

"Do? Aha, my girl! 'What can you have to do with the City,' " good-humouredly attempting to imitate her tone—"Indeed? Aha, miss! Don't try to play mock-modest with *me*! You know as well as I do what I'm going to say!" he added, looking at her archly, as *he* fancied, but so as to blanch her cheek and agitate her whole frame with an irresistible tremor. Her acute and feeling father observed her emotion. "There—now that's just the way all you young misses behave on these occasions! I suppose it's considered mighty pretty! As if it wasn't all a matter of course for a young woman to hear about a young husband!"

"Papa—how you *do* love a joke!" replied Miss Hillary, with a sickly smile, making a desperate effort to carry her wine-glass to her lips, in which she succeeded, swallowing every drop that was in it, while her father electrified her by proceeding—"It's no use mincing matters—the thing is gone too far."

"Gone too far!" echoed Miss Hillary, mechanically.

"Yes—gone too far, I say, and I stick to it. A bargain's a bargain all the world over, whatever it's about; and a bargain I've struck to day. You're my daughter—my only daughter, d'ye see—and I've been a good while on the look-out for a proper person to marry you to—and, egad! to-day I've got him—my future son-in-law, d'ye hear, and one that will clap a coronet on my Molly's pretty head—and on the day he does so, I do two things; I give you a plum—and myself cut Mincing Lane, and sink the shop for the rest of my days. There's nuts for

you to crack! Aha, Molly—what d'ye say to all this? An't it news?"

"*Say!* why I—I—I"—stammered the young lady, her face nearly as white as the handkerchief on which her eyes were violently fixed, and with which her fingers were hurriedly playing.

"Why—Molly! What's the matter? What the —— a-hem!—are you gone so pale for? Gad—I see how it is—I've been too abrupt, as your poor mother has it! But the thing is as I said, that's flat, come what will—say it how one will, take it how you will! So make up your mind, Molly, like a good girl as you are—come, kiss me! I never loved you so much as I do now I'm going to lose you!"

She made no attempt to rise from her chair, so he got up from his own, and approached her.

"Adad—but what's the matter here? Your little hands are as cold as a corpse's. Why, Molly!—what—what nonsense." He chucked her under the chin.—"You're trying to frighten me, Molly—I know you are! 'Ah-ha!'" He grew more and more alarmed at her deadly paleness and apparent insensibility to what he was saying. "Well, now"—he paused, and looked anxiously at her. "Who would have thought," he added suddenly, "that it would have taken the girl a-back so? Come, come!"—slapping her smartly on her back,—"*a joke's a joke, and I've had mine, but it's been carried too far, I'm afraid*"——

"Dear—dearest papa," gasped his daughter, suddenly raising her eyes, and fixing them with a steadfast brightening look upon his, at the same time catching hold of his hands convulsively—"So it is—*a joke! a*—

joke—it is”—— and gradually sinking back in her chair, to her father’s unspeakable alarm, she swooned. Holding her in his arms, he roared stoutly for assistance, and in a twinkling a posse of servants, male and female, obeying the summons, rushed pell-mell into the dining-room: the ordinary hubbub attendant on a fainting fit ensued; cold water sprinkled—eau-de-Cologne—volatile salts, &c. &c. Then the young lady, scarce restored to her senses, was supported, or rather carried, by her maid to her own apartment, and Mr Hillary was left to himself for the remainder of the evening, flustered and confounded beyond all expression. The result of his troubled ruminations was, that the sudden communication of such prodigious good fortune had upset his daughter with joy; and that he must return to the charge in a day or two, and break it to her more easily. The real fact was, that he had that day assured the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Scamp of his daughter’s heart, hand, and fortune; and that exemplary personage had agreed to dine at Bullion House on the ensuing Sunday, for the purpose of being introduced to his future Viscountess, whose noble fortune was to place his financial matters upon an entirely new basis—at least for some time to come, and enable him to show his honest face once more in divers amiable coteries at C——’s and elsewhere. Old Hillary’s dazzled eyes could see nothing but his Lordship’s coronet; and he had no more doubt about his right thus to dispose of his daughter’s heart, than he had about his right to draw upon Messrs Cash, Credit & Co., his bankers, without first consulting them to ascertain whether they would honour his drafts.

Miss Hillary did not make her appearance the next

morning at her father's breakfast table, her maid being sent to say, that her young lady had a violent headach, and so forth; the consequence of which was, that the old gentleman departed for the City in a terrible temper, as every member of his establishment could have testified if they had been asked. Miss Hillary had spent an hour or two of the preceding midnight in writing to Elliott a long and somewhat incoherent detail of what had happened. She gave but a poor account of herself to her father at dinner that day. He was morosely silent; she pale, absent, disconcerted.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Mary?" enquired Mr Hillary, with stern abruptness, as soon as the servants had withdrawn,—“What were all those tantrums of yours about last night, eh?”

“Indeed, papa,” replied his trembling daughter, “I hardly know—but really—you must remember, you said such *very* odd things, and so suddenly, and you looked so angry”——

“Tut, girl, poh! Fiddle faddle!” exclaimed her father, gulping down a glass of wine with great energy. “I could almost—a-hem!—really it looked as if you had taken a little too much, eh? What harm was there in me telling you that you were going soon to be married? What’s a girl born and bred up for but to be married? Eh, Mary?” continued her father, determined, this time, to go to work with greater skill and tact than on the preceding evening. “I want an answer, Mary!”

“Why, papa, it *was* a very odd thing now, was not it?” said his daughter, with an affectionate smile, drawing nearer to her father, her knees trembling, however, the while; “and I know you did it only to try whether I

was a silly vain girl! Why should I want to be married, papa, when you and my poor mamma are so kind to me?"

"Humph!" grunted her father, gulping down a great glass of claret. "And d'ye think we're to live for ever? I must see you established before long, for my health, hem! hem! is none of the strongest" (he had scarcely ever known what an hour's illness was in his life, except his late accident, from which he had completely recovered); "and as for your poor mother, you know"—a long pause ensued here. "Now, suppose," continued the wily tactician, "suppose, Molly," looking at her very anxiously—"suppose I *wasn't* in a joke last night, after all?"

"Well, papa"——

"*Well, papa!*" echoed her father, sneeringly and snappishly, unable to conceal his ill-humour; "but it isn't '*well, papa*;' I can't understand all this nonsense. Mary, you must not give yourself airs!—Did you ever happen to hear—a-hem!" He suddenly stopped short, sipped his wine, and paused, evidently intending to make some important communication; and striving, at the same time, to assume an unconcerned air—"Did you ever hear of the right honourable the Lord Viscount Scamp, Molly?"

"Lord Scamp, papa?—Oh, yes—I've seen things about him, now and then, in the newspapers. Isn't he a great gambler, papa?" enquired Miss Hillary, looking at her father calmly.

"No—it's a lie, it's a d——d lie"—replied her father furiously, whirling about the numerous seals of his watch. "Has any one been putting it into your head to say such stuff?"

"No one, indeed, papa, only the newspapers"——

"And are you such an idiot as to believe newspapers? Didn't they say, a year or two ago, that my house was in for L.20,000, when Gumarabic and Co. broke? And wasn't *that* a great lie! I didn't lose a fiftieth of the sum! No," he added, after a long pause, "Lord Scamp is no such thing. He's a vastly agreeable young man, and takes an uncommon interest in City matters, and that's saying no small things for a nobleman of his high rank. Why, it's said he may one day be a duke!"

"Indeed, papa! And do you know him?"

"Y—y—es!—Know him? Of course!—Hem!—Do you think I come and talk up at Highbury about every body I know? Know Lord Scamp? He's an ornament to the peerage."

"How long have you known him, papa?"

"How long, puss?—Why this—a good while! However, as he dines here on Sunday"——

"Dines here on Sunday!—Lord Scamp dines here next Sunday? Oh, papa! this is surely another joke of yours!"

"Curse me, then, if I can see it!—What the deuce is there so odd in my asking a nobleman to dinner, if I think proper? Why, if it comes to that, I can buy up a dozen of them any day, if I choose;" and he thrust his hands deeply into his breeches' pockets.

"Yes, dear papa, I know you could—if they were worth buying," replied Miss Hillary, with a faint smile. "Give *me* a great merchant before a hundred good-for-nothing lords!" and she rose, put her hands about his neck, and kissed him affectionately.

"Well—I—I—don't think you're so vastly far off the

mark *there*, at any rate, Polly," said her father, with a subdued air of exultation; adding in a lower tone, and a mollified manner, "but at the same time, you know, there *may* be lords as good as any merchant in the city of London—hem! and, after all,—a lord's a superior article, too, in respect of birth and breeding."

"Yes, papa, they're all well enough, I dare say, in their own circles: but in their hearts, depend upon it, they only despise us poor citizens."

"*Us poor citizens*—I like that!" drawled her father, pouring out his wine slowly with a magnificent air, and drinking it off in silence. "You shall see, however, on Sunday, Poll! whether you're correct"——

"What! am *I* to dine with you?" enquired Miss Hillary, with irrepressible alarm.

"You to dine with *us*?" interrupted her father, in his former angry tone. "Of course you will! Why the devil should not you?"

"My poor mamma"——

"Oh—a-hem! I mean—nonsense—you can go to her after dinner. Certainly—I suppose you *must* attend to her!"

"Very well, papa—I will obey you—whatever you like," replied Miss Hillary, a sudden tremor running from head to foot.

"That's a dear good girl—that's my own Poll! And, hearken," he added, with a mixture of good-humour and anxiety, "make yourself look handsome—never mind the cost—money's no object, you know! So tell that pert minx, your maid Joliffe, that I expect she'll turn you out first-rate that day—if it's only to save the credit of *us—poor—merchants*!—ha, ha, ha!"

"Gracious ! papa—but why are you really so anxious about my dressing so well ?"

Her father, who had sat swallowing glass after glass with unusual rapidity, at the same time unconsciously mixing his wines, as he carried on this exciting dialogue, put his finger to the side of his nose, and winked in a particularly knowing manner. His daughter saw her advantage in an instant ; and with the ready tact of her sex, resolved at once to find out all that was in her father's heart concerning her. She smiled as cheerfully as she could, and affected to enter readily into all his feelings. She poured him out one or two glasses more of his favourite wine, and chattered as fast as himself till she at length succeeded in extracting from him the frightful avowal, that he had distinctly promised her to Lord Scamp, whose visit, on the ensuing Sunday, would be paid to her as to his future wife. Soon after this she rung for candles ; and hastily kissing her father, who had fairly fallen asleep, she withdrew to her own room, and there spent the next hour or two in confidential converse with her maid Joliffe.

Sunday came, and, true enough, with it Lord Scamp—a handsome, heartless coxcomb, whose cool, easy assurance, and *business-like* attentions to Miss Hillary, excited in her a disgust she could scarcely conceal. In vain was her father's eager and anxious eye fixed upon her ; she maintained an air of uniform indifference ; listened almost in silence—the silence of contempt—to all the lispings twaddle uttered by her would-be lover, and so well acted, in short, the part she had determined upon, that his Lordship, as he drove home, felt somewhat disconcerted at being thus foiled for—as he imagined—the first time

in his life ; and her father, after obsequiously attending his Lordship to his cab, summoned his trembling daughter back from her mother's apartment into the drawing-room, and assailed her with a fury she had never known him exhibit—at least towards any member of his family. From that day might be dated the commencement of a kind of domestic reign of terror, at the hitherto quiet and happy Bullion House. The one great aim of her father concerning his daughter and his fortune had been—or rather seemed on the point of being—frustrated by that daughter. But he was not lightly to be turned from his purpose. He redoubled his civilities to Lord Scamp, who kept up his visits with a systematic punctuality, despite the contemptuous and disgustful air with which the young lady constantly received him. The right honourable roué was playing, indeed, for too deep a stake—an accomplished and elegant girl, with a hundred thousand pounds down, and nearly double that sum, he understood, at her father's death—to admit of his throwing up the game, while the possibility of a chance remained. Half the poor girl's fortune was already transferred, in Lord Scamp's mind, to the pockets of half a dozen harpies at the turf and the table ; so he was, as before observed, very punctual in his engagements at Bullion House, with patient politeness continuing to pay the most flattering attentions to Miss Hillary—and her father. The latter was kept in a state of constant fever. Conscious of the transparent contempt exhibited by his daughter towards her noble suitor, he could at length hardly look his Lordship in the face, as, day after day, he obsequiously assured him that "there wasn't any thing in it"—and that for all his daugh-

nonsense, he already "felt himself a lord's father-in-law!" Miss Hillary's life was becoming intolerable, subjected as she was to such systematic persecution, from which, at length, the sick chamber of her mother scarce afforded her a momentary sanctuary. A thousand times she formed the desperate determination to confess all to her father, and risk the fearful consequences: for such she dreaded they would be, knowing well her father's disposition, and the terrible frustration of his favourite and long-laid schemes which was taking place. Such constant anxiety and agitation, added to confinement in her mother's bed-chamber, sensibly affected her health: and at the suggestion of Elliott, with whom she contrived to keep up a frequent correspondence, she had at length determined upon opening the fearful communication to her father, and so being at all events delivered from the intolerable presence and attentions of Lord Scamp.

By what means it came to pass, neither she nor Elliott was ever able to discover; but on the morning of the day she had fixed for her desperate *dénouement*, Mr Hillary, during the temporary absence of his daughter, returned from the City about two o'clock, most unexpectedly, his manner disturbed, his countenance pale and troubled. Accompanied by his solicitor, he made his way at once to his daughter's apartment, with his own hand seized her desk and carried it down to the drawing-room, and forced it open. Frantic with fury he was listening to one of Elliott's fondest letters to his daughter being read by his solicitor as she unconsciously entered the drawing-room, in walking attire. It would be in vain to attempt describing the scene that immediately ensued. Old Hillary's lips moved, but his utterance was choked by

the tremendous rage which possessed him, and forced him almost to the verge of madness. Trembling from head to foot, and his straining eyes apparently starting from their sockets, he pointed in silence to a little heap of opened letters lying on the table, on which stood also her desk. She perceived that all was discovered,—and with a faint cry fell senseless upon the floor. There, as far as her father was concerned, she might have continued; but his companion sprang to the bell, lifted her insensible form from the floor, and gave her to the entering servants, who instantly bore her to her own room. Mr Jeffreys the solicitor, a highly respectable man, to whom Mr Hillary had hurried the instant that he recovered from the first shock occasioned by discovering his daughter's secret—vehemently expostulated with his client on hearing the violent and vindictive measures he threatened to adopt towards his daughter and Elliott; for the tone of the correspondence which then lay before him had satisfied him of the fatal extent to which his daughter's affections were engaged.

Now her treatment of Lord Scamp was accounted for! Her dreadful agitation on first hearing his intentions concerning that young nobleman and herself was explained! So here was his fondest hope blighted—the sole ambition of his life defeated—and by one of his own—his inferior servants—an outer clerk on his establishment at Mincing Lane! Confounded by a retrospect into the last few months, “Where have been my eyes—my common sense?”—he groaned—“the devil himself has done it all, and made me assist in it! Oh, I see! I remember! Those cursed days when he came up from the City to me—and when—I must always have *her* with me! There

the mischief was begun—oh, it's clear as the daylight! *I've done it! I've done it all! And now—by——! I'll undo it all!*" Mr Jeffreys at length succeeded in subduing the extreme excitement of his client, and bringing him to converse a little more calmly on the painful and embarrassing discovery that had been made. Innumerable were the conjectures as to the means by which this secret acquaintance and correspondence had been commenced and carried on. Every servant in the house was examined—but in vain. Even Joliffe, his daughter's maid, came at length, however strongly suspected, still undiscovered, out of the fierce and searching scrutiny. Poor Mrs Hillary's precarious situation even did not exempt her from the long and angry enquiries of her exasperated husband. She had really, however, been entirely unacquainted with the affair.

The next morning, Elliott was summoned from the City to Bullion House, whither he repaired accordingly about twelve o'clock, little imagining the occasion of his summons; for Miss Hillary had not communicated to him the intention she had formed of breaking the matter to her father, nor had she had any opportunity of telling him of the alarming discovery that had taken place. He perceived, nevertheless, certain symptoms of disturbance in the ominous looks of the porter who opened the hall-door and the servant who conducted him to the drawing-room, where he found Mr Hillary and another gentleman—Mr Jeffreys—seated together at a table covered with papers—both of them obviously agitated.

"So, sir," commenced Mr Hillary, fixing his furious eye upon Elliott as he entered, "your villany's found out—deep as you are!"

"Villany, sir?" echoed Elliott indignantly, but turning very pale.

"Yes, sir—villany! villany! d——ble villany! ay—it's all found out! Ah—ah—you cursed scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr Hillary, with quivering lips and shaking his fist at Elliott.

"For God's sake, Mr Hillary, be calm!" whispered Mr Jeffreys, and then addressed Elliott with a quiet severity—"Of course, Mr Elliott, you are aware of the occasion of this dreadful agitation on the part of Mr Hillary?" Elliott bowed, with a stern inquisitive air, but did not open his lips.

"You beggarly brute—you filthy d——d upstart—you—you"—stammered Mr Hillary, with uncontrollable fury, "your father was a scoundrel before you, sir—he cut his throat, sir"——

Elliott's face whitened in an instant, his expanding eye settled upon Mr Hillary, and his chest heaved with mighty emotion. It was happy for the old man that Elliott at length recollected in him—the *father of Mary Hillary*. He turned his eye for an instant towards Mr Jeffreys, who was looking at him with an imploring, compassionate expression; Elliott saw and felt that he was thunderstruck at the barbarity of his client. Elliott's eye remained fixed upon Mr Jeffreys for nearly a minute, and then filled with tears. Mr Jeffreys muttered a few words earnestly in the ear of Mr Hillary, who seemed also a little staggered at the extent of his last sally.

"Will you take a seat, Mr Elliott?" said Mr Jeffreys, mildly. Elliott bowed, but remained standing, his hat grasped by his left hand with convulsive force. "You will make allowance, sir," continued Mr Jeffreys, ""

the dreadful agitation of Mr Hillary, and reflect that your own conduct has occasioned it."

"So you dare to think of marrying my daughter, eh?" thundered Mr Hillary, as if about to rise from his chair. "By ——, but I'll spoil your sport though—I'll be even with you!" gasped the old man, and sunk back panting in his seat.

"You cannot really be in earnest, sir," resumed Mr Jeffreys, in the same calm and severe tone and manner in which he had spoken from the first—"in thinking yourself entitled to form an attachment and alliance to Miss Hillary?"

"Why am I asked these questions, sir, and in this most extraordinary manner?" enquired Elliott, firmly, "have I ever said one single syllable"——

"Oh, spare your denials, Mr Elliott," said Mr Jeffreys, pointing with a bitter smile to the letters lying open on the table at which he sat, "these letters of yours express your feelings and intentions pretty plainly. Believe me, sir, every thing is known!"

"Well, sir, and what then?"—enquired Elliott haughtily; "those letters, I presume, are mine, addressed to Miss Hillary?" Mr Jeffreys bowed contemptuously and indignantly. "Well then, sir, I now avow the feelings those letters express. I have formed, however unworthy myself, a fervent attachment to Miss Hillary, and I will die before I disavow it."

"There! hear him! hark to the fellow! I shall go mad—I shall!" almost roared Mr Hillary, springing out of his chair, and walking to and fro, between it and that occupied by Mr Jeffreys, with hurried steps and vehement gesticulations. "He owns it! He does! The——" and

he uttered a perfect volley of execrations. Elliott submitted to them in silence. Mr Jeffreys again whispered energetically into the ear of his client, who resumed his seat, but with his eyes fixed on Elliott, and muttering vehemently to himself.

"You see, sir, the wretchedness that your most unwarrantable—your artful—nay, your wicked and presumptuous conduct has brought upon this family—I earnestly hope that it is not too late for you to listen to reason—to abandon your insane projects." He paused, and Elliott bowed. "It is in vain," continued Mr Jeffreys, pointing to the letters, "to conceal our fears that your attentions must have proved but too acceptable to Miss Hillary—but we give you credit for more honour, more good sense, than will admit of your carrying further this most unfortunate affair, of your persisting in such a wild—I must speak plainly—such an audacious attachment, one that is utterly unsuitable to your means, your prospects, your station, your birth, your education"——

"You will be pleased, sir, to drop the last two words," interrupted Elliott, sternly.

"Why, you fellow ! why, you're *my clerk* ! I pay you wages !—You're a hired servant of mine !" exclaimed Mr Hillary, with infinite contempt.

"Well, sir," continued Mr Jeffreys, "this affair is too important to allow of our quarrelling about words. Common sense must tell you that under no possible view of the case can you be a suitable match for Miss Hillary ; and, therefore, common honesty enjoins the course you ought to pursue. However, sir," he added, in a sharper tone, evidently piqued at the composure and firmness maintained by Elliott, "the long and short of it

this affair will not be allowed to go further, sir. Mr Hillary is resolved to prevent it—come what will.”

“Ay, so help me God!” ejaculated Mr Hillary, casting a ferocious glance at Elliott.

“Well, sir,” said Elliott, with a sigh, “what would you have me do?—Pray, proceed, sir.”

“Immediately renounce all pretensions,” replied Mr Jeffreys, eagerly, “to Miss Hillary—return her letters—pledge yourself to discontinue your attempts to gain her affections, and I am authorized to offer a foreign situation connected with the house you at present serve, and to guarantee you a fixed income of £500 a-year.”

“Ay!—Hark’ee, Elliott, I’ll do all this, so help me God!” suddenly interrupted Mr Hillary, casting a look of imploring agony at Elliott, who bowed respectfully, but made no reply.

“Suppose, sir,” continued Mr Jeffreys, with an anxious and disappointed air,—“suppose, sir, for a moment, that Miss Hillary were to entertain equally ardent feelings towards you, with those which, in these letters, you have expressed to her—can you, as a man of honour—of delicacy—of spirit—persevere with your addresses where the inevitable consequence of success on your part must be her degradation from the sphere in which she has hitherto moved—her condemnation to straitened circumstances—perhaps to absolute want—for life!—For believe me, sir, if you suppose that Mr Hillary’s fortune is to supply you both with the means of defying him—to support you in a life, on her part of frightful ingratitude and disobedience, and on yours of presumption and selfishness—you will find yourself fearfully mistaken!”

“He’s speaking the truth—by ——— he is!” said

Mr Hillary, striving to assume a calm manner. "If you *do* come together after all this, d——n me if I don't leave every penny I have in the world to an hospital—or to a jail—in which one or both of you may perhaps end your days, after all!"

"Possibly, Mr Elliott," resumed Mr Jeffreys, "I am to infer from your silence that you doubt—that you disbelieve these threats. If so, I assure you, you are grievously and fatally mistaken; you do not, believe me, know Mr Hillary as I know him, and have known him this twenty years and upwards. I solemnly and truly assure you that I believe he will as certainly do what he says, and for ever forsake you both, as you are standing now before us!"—He paused. "Again, sir, you may imagine that Miss Hillary has property of her own—at her own disposal. Do not so sadly deceive yourself on that score! Miss Hillary has, at this moment, exactly £600 at her own disposal"——

"Ay—only £600—that's the uttermost penny"——

"And how long is that to last?—come, sir—allow me to ask you what you have to say to all this?" enquired Mr Jeffreys, folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair, with an air of mingled chagrin and exhaustion. Elliott drew a long breath.

"I have but little to say, Mr Jeffreys, in answer to what you have been stating," he commenced, with a melancholy but determined air. "However you may suspect me, and misconstrue and misrepresent my character and motives, I never in my life meditated a dishonourable action." He paused, thinking Mr Hillary was about to interrupt him, but he was mistaken. Mr Hillary was silently devouring every word that fell from Elliott, as also

was Mr Jeffreys. "I am here as a *hired servant*, indeed," resumed Elliott, with a sigh,—“and I am the son of one who—who—was an unfortunate”—his eyes filled, and his voice faltered. For some seconds there was a dead silence. The perspiration stood on every feature of Mr Hillary's agitated countenance. "But of course, all this is as nothing here." He gathered courage, and proceeded with a calm and resolute air. "I know how hateful I must now appear to you. I *do* deserve bitter reproof—and surely I have had it, for my presumption in aspiring to the hand and heart of Miss Hillary. I tried long to resist the passion that devoured me, but in vain. Miss Hillary knew my destitute situation; she had many opportunities of ascertaining my character—she conceived a noble affection for me—I returned her love; I was obliged to do it secretly—and as far as that goes, I submit to any censure—I feel—I know that I have done wrong!—If Miss Hillary choose to withdraw her affection from me, I will submit, though my heart should break. If, on the contrary, she continue to love me," his eye brightened—"I am not cowardly or base enough to undervalue her love." Here Mr Hillary struggled with Mr Jeffreys, who, however, succeeded in restraining his client. "If Miss Hillary condescends to become my wife"—

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" groaned Mr Hillary, clasping his hands upon his forehead—"open the windows, Mr Jeffreys—or I shall be smothered—I am dying—I shall go mad"—

"I will retire, sir," said Elliott, addressing Mr Jeffreys, who was opening the nearest window.

"No, but you shan't though"—gasped Mr Hillary—"you shall stop here"—he panted for breath—"Hark'ee,

sir—d'ye hear, Elliott—listen”—he could not recover his breath. Mr Jeffreys implored him to take time—to be cool—“ Yes—now I'm cool enough—I've—taken time—to consider—I have ! Hark'ee, sir—if you dare to think—of having—my daughter—and if she—is such a cursed fool—as to think of having—you”—he stopped for a few seconds for want of breath—“ why—look'ee, sir—so help me God—you may both—both of you—and your children—if you have any—die in the streets—like dogs—I've done with you—both of you—not a farthing—not a morsel of bread ; — me if I do !” Here he breathed like a hard-run horse ; “ Now, sir—like a thief as you are ! —go on courting—my daughter—marry her ! ruin her !—Go, and believe that all I'm saying is—a lie!—go, and hope that, by and by, I'll forgive you—and all that—try it, sir ! Marry, and see whether I give in !—I'll teach you—to rob an old man—of his child !—The instant you leave this house, sir—this gentleman—makes my will—he does !—and when I'm dead—you may both of you—go to Doctors' Commons—borrow a shilling, if you can—and see if your names—or your children's—are in it, ha, ha, ha !” he concluded with a bitter and ghastly laugh, snapping his shaking fingers at Elliott—“ Get away, sir—marry, after this, if you dare !”—

Elliott almost reeled out of the room, and out of the house, and did not fully recollect himself till the groom of his aristocratic competitor, Lord Scamp, whose cab was dashing up to the gates of Bullion House shouted to him to get out of the way, or be driven over !

Elliott returned to his desk, at Mincing-Lane, too much agitated and confused, however, to be able to attend

to business. He therefore obtained a reluctant permission to absent himself till the morrow. Even the interval thus afforded, however, he was quite incapable of spending in the reflection required by the very serious situation in which he had been so suddenly placed. He could not bring his mind to bear steadily upon any distinct point of his dreadful interview with Mr Hillary and Mr Jeffreys; and at length, lost and bewildered in a maze of indefinite conjecture—of doubtful hopes and fears, he retired early to bed. There, after tossing about for several hours, he at length dropped asleep—and awoke at an early hour somewhat refreshed and calmed.—Well, then, what was to be done?

He felt a conviction that Mr Hillary would be an uncompromising—an inexorable opponent of their marriage, however long they might postpone it with the hope of wearing out or softening away his repugnance to it; and that if they married in defiance of him, he would fulfil every threat he had uttered. Of these two points he felt as certain as of his existence.

He believed Miss Hillary's attachment to him to be ardent and unalterable; and that nothing short of main force would prevent her from adopting any suggestion he might offer. As for himself, he was passionately—and his heart loudly told him *disinterestedly* attached to her; he could, therefore—as far as he himself was concerned—cheerfully bid adieu to all hopes of enjoying a shilling of her father's wealth, and be joyfully content to labour for their daily bread. But—a fearful array of contingencies here presented themselves before him. Suppose they married, they would certainly have £600 to commence with; but suppose his health failed him—or from any

other cause he should become unable to support himself, a wife—and it might be—a large family; how soon would £600 disappear? And what would be then before them?—His heart shrunk from exposing the generous and confiding creature whose love he had gained, to such terrible dangers. He could—he *would*—write to her, and entreat her to forget him—to obey the reasonable wishes of her father. He felt that Mr Hillary had great and grievous cause for complaint against him; could make every allowance for his feelings, and forgive their coarse and even brutal manifestation—and yet, when he reflected upon *some* expressions he had let fall—upon the withering scorn with which he had been treated—the more he looked at THIS view of the case, the more he felt the spirit of A MAN swelling within him. He never trod so firmly, nor carried himself so erectly, as he did on his way down to the City that morning.

But then again—what misery was poor Miss Hillary then enduring! What cruel and incessant persecution was being inflicted upon her; but *SHE*, too, had a high and bold spirit—he kindled as he pursued his meditations—he felt that the consciousness of kindred qualities endeared her to him tenfold more even than before.

Thus he communed with himself, but at length he determined on writing the letter he had proposed, and did so that night.

He was not dismissed, as he had expected, from the service of Mr Hillary, who retained him, at the suggestion of Mr Jeffreys—that shrewd gentleman being aware that he could then keep Elliott's movements more distinctly under his own eye, and have more frequent opportunities of negotiating with him on behalf of Mr

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Hillary. Elliott's position in the establishment was such as never brought him into personal contact with Mr Hillary; and apparently no one but himself and Mr Hillary were acquainted with the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. As before hinted, Mr Jeffreys was incessant in his efforts, both personally and by letter, to induce Elliott to break off the disastrous connexion he had formed; and, from an occasional note which Miss Hillary contrived—despite all the *espionage* to which she was subjected—to smuggle to him, he learned, with poignant sorrow, that his apprehensions of the treatment she would receive at the hands of her father, were but too well founded. She repelled with an affectionate and indignant energy, his offers and proposals to break off the affair. She told him that her spirit rose with the cruelty she suffered, and declared herself ready, if he thought fit, to fly from the scene of trouble, and be united to him immediately, and for ever. Many and many a sleepless night did such communications as these ensure to Elliott. He saw infinite danger in attempting a clandestine marriage with Miss Hillary, even should she be a readily consenting party. His upright and manly disposition revolted from a measure so underhand, so unworthy; and yet, what other course lay open to them? His own position at the counting-house was becoming very trying and painful. It soon became apparent that, on some account or another, he was an object of almost loathing disregard to the august personage at the head of the establishment; and the natural consequence was, an increasing infliction of petty annoyances and hardships by those connected with him in daily business. He was required to do more than he had ever before been

called upon to do, and felt himself the subject of frequent and offensive remark, as well as suspicion. The ill-treatment of his superiors, however, and the impertinences of his equals and inferiors, he treated with the same patient and resolute contempt, conducting himself with the utmost vigilance and circumspection, and applying to business—however unjustly accumulated upon him—with an energy, perseverance, and good humour, that only the more mortified his unworthy enemies. Poor Elliott! why did he continue in the service of Hillary, Hungate, and Company? How utterly chimerical was the hope he sometimes entertained of its being possible that his exemplary conduct could ever make any impression upon the hard heart of Mr Hillary!

Miss Hillary did really, as has been stated, suffer a martyrdom at Bullion House, at the hands of her father. Every day caresses and curses were alternated, and she felt that she was in fact a *prisoner*—her every movement watched, her every look scrutinized. Mr Hillary frequently caused to be conveyed to her reports the most false and degrading concerning Elliott! but they were such transparent fabrications, as of course to defeat the ends proposed. She found some comfort in the society of her mother, who, though for a long time feeling and expressing strong disapprobation of her daughter's attachment to Elliott, at length relented, and even endeavoured to influence Mr Hillary on their daughter's behalf. Her kind offices were, however, suddenly interrupted by a second attack of paralysis, which deprived her of the power of speech and motion. This dreadful shock, occurring at such a moment, was too much for Miss Hillary, who was removed from attending affectionately at the bedside of

her unhappy mother, to her own room, where she lay for nearly a fortnight in a violent fever. So far from these domestic trials tending, however, to soften the heart of Mr Hillary, they apparently contributed only to harden it—to aggravate his hatred of Elliott—of him who had done so much to disturb, to destroy his domestic peace, his fondest wishes and expectations.

Lord Scamp continued his interested and flattering attentions to Mr Hillary, with whom he was continually dining, and at length—a proof of the prodigious ascendancy he had acquired over the stupid *millionaire*—succeeded in borrowing from him a very considerable sum of money. Mr Hillary soon apprized his Lordship of the real nature of the hinderance to his marriage with Miss Hillary; and his Lordship of course felt it his duty, not to speak of his interest, to foster and inflame the fury of his wished-for father-in-law, against his obscure and presumptuous rival. Several schemes were proposed by this worthy couple for the purpose of putting an end to the pretensions and prospects of this “insolent *parvenu* of the outer counting-house,” as his Lordship styled poor Elliott. An accidental circumstance at length suggested to them a plot so artful and atrocious, that poor Elliott fell a victim to it.

On returning to the counting-house, one day, from the little chop-house at which he had been swallowing a hasty and frugal dinner, he observed indications of some unusual occurrence. No one spoke to him; all seemed to look at him as with suspicion and alarm. He had hardly hung up his hat, and reseated himself at his desk, when a message was brought to him from Mr Hillary, who required his immediate attendance in his private

room. Thither, therefore, he repaired, with some surprise—and with more surprise beheld all the partners assembled, together with the head clerk, the solicitor of the firm, and one or two strangers. He had hardly closed the door after himself, when Mr Hillary pointed to him, saying, "This is your prisoner—take him into custody."

"Surrender, sir—you're our prisoner," said one of the two strangers, both of whom now advanced to him, one laying hold of his collar, the other fumbling in his pocket, and taking out a pair of handcuffs. Elliott staggered several paces from them on hearing the astounding language of Mr Hillary, and but that he was held by the officer who had grasped his collar, seemed likely to have fallen. He turned deadly pale. For a second or two he spoke not.

Fetch a glass of water, said Mr Fleming, one of the partners, observing Elliott's lips losing their colour, and moving without uttering any sound. But he recovered himself from the momentary shock, without the aid of the water, which seemed to have been placed in readiness beforehand, so soon was it produced. Pushing aside the officer's hand that raised the glass to his lips, he exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this, sir? How dare you deprive me of my liberty, sir?"—addressing, Mr Hillary—"What am I charged with?"

"Embezzling the money of your employers," interposed the solicitor. As he spoke, poor Elliott fixed upon him a stare of horror, and after standing and gazing in silence for several moments, attempted to speak, but in vain; and fell in a kind of fit into the arms of the officers. When he had recovered, he was conducted to a hackney-

coach which had been some time in readiness, and conveyed to the police office ; where an hour or two afterwards, Mr Hillary, accompanied by Mr Fleming, the solicitor, and two of Elliott's fellow-clerks, attended to prefer the charge. Elliott was immediately brought to the bar, where he stood very pale, but calm and self-possessed, his eyes fixed upon Mr Hillary with a steadfast searching look that nothing could have sustained but his indignant consciousness of innocence. He heard the charge preferred against him without uttering a word. The firm had had reason for some time, it was said, to suspect that they were robbed by some member of their establishment ; that suspicion fell at length upon the prisoner ; that he was purposely directed that day to go unexpectedly to dinner, having been watched during the early part of the morning ; that his desk was immediately opened and searched, and three five-pound notes, previously marked (and these produced were so marked), found in his pocket-book, carefully hid under a heap of papers ; that he had been several times lately seen with bank-notes in his hand, which he seemed desirous of concealing ; that he had been very intimate with one of his fellow-clerks, who was now in Newgate on a charge similar to the present ; that the firm had actually been robbed to a considerable amount ; that Elliott had only that morning been asked by one of the clerks, then present, to lend him some money, when the prisoner replied that he had not got £5 in the world.—All this, and more, Elliott listened to without uttering a syllable.

“ Well, sir,” said one of the magistrates, “ what have you to say to this very serious charge ? ”

"Say!—Why, *can* you believe it, sir?" replied Elliott, with a frank air of unaffected incredulity.

"Do *you* deny it, sir?" enquired the magistrate, coldly.

"Yes I do! Peremptorily, indignantly! It is absurd! *I rob my employers?* They know better—that it is impossible!"

"Can you prove that this charge is false?" said the magistrate with a matter-of-fact air. "Can you explain, or deny the facts that have been just sworn to?" Elliott looked at him, as if lost in thought. "Do you hear me, sir?" repeated the magistrate, sternly; "at the same time you are not *bound* to say any thing; and I would caution you against criminating yourself." Still Elliott paused. "If you are not prepared, I will remand you for a week, before committing you to prison."

"Commit me to prison, sir!"—repeated Elliott, with at once a perplexed and indignant air,—“Why, I am as innocent as yourself!”

"Then, sir, you will be able easily to account for the £15, found in your desk this morning"—

"Ah, yes—I had forgotten that—I deny the fact!—They could not have been found in my desk—for I have not more than £4, and a few shillings in the world, till my next quarter's salary becomes due."

"But it is *sworn* here—you heard it sworn as well as I did—that the money *was* found there. Here are the witnesses—you may ask them any questions you think proper—but they swore to the fact most distinctly."—

"Then, sir," said Elliott, with a start, as if electrified with some sudden thought—"I see it all! Oh, God, I now see it all! It was placed there on purpose! It is a plot laid to ruin me!" He turned round abruptly

towards Mr Hillary, and fixing a piercing look upon him, he exclaimed, in a low voice, "Oh, old man!" He was on the eve of explaining Mr Hillary's probable motives—but the thought of *his daughter* suddenly sealed his lips. "Sir, said he, presently addressing the magistrate, "I take God to witness that I am innocent of this atrocious charge. I am the victim of a conspiracy—commit me, sir,—commit me at once! I put my trust in God—the father of the fatherless."

The magistrates seemed struck with what he had said, and much more with his manner of saying it. They leaned back, and conferred together for a few minutes. "Our minds are not quite satisfied," said the one who had already spoken, "as to the propriety of immediately committing the prisoner to Newgate. Perhaps additional evidence may be brought forward in a few days. Prisoner, you are remanded for a week."

"I hope, sir," said Mr Hillary, "that he will by that time be able to clear his character—nothing I wish more. It's a painful thing to me and my partners to have to press such a charge as this—but we must protect ourselves from the robbery of servants!" This was said by the speaker to the magistrates; but he did not dare to look at the prisoner, whose piercing, indignant eye he *felt* to be fixed upon him, and to follow his every motion.

That day week Elliott was fully committed to Newgate: and on the next morning, the following paragraph appeared in the newspapers:—

"—— Street. Henry Elliott, a clerk in the house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane (who was brought to this office a week ago, charged with

embezzling the sum of £15, the money of his employers, and suspected of being an accomplice of the young man who was recently committed to Newgate from this office on a similar charge), was yesterday fully committed for trial. He is, we understand, a young man of respectable connexions, and excellent education. From his appearance and demeanour he would have seemed incapable of committing the very serious offence with which he stands charged. He seemed horror-struck on the charge being first preferred, and asseverated his innocence firmly, and in a very impressive manner, declaring that he was the victim of a conspiracy. In answer to a question of the magistrate, one of his employers stated, that up to the time of preferring this charge, the prisoner had borne an excellent character in the house."

The newspaper containing this paragraph found its way, on the evening of the day on which it appeared, into Miss Hillary's room, through her maid, as she was preparing to undress, and conveyed to her the first intimation of poor Elliott's dreadful situation. The moment that she had read it, she sprung to her feet, pushed aside her maid, who attempted to prevent her quitting her apartment, and with the newspaper in her hand, flew wildly down the stairs, and burst into the dining-room, where her father was sitting alone, in his easy-chair, drawn close to the fire. "Father!" she almost shrieked, springing to within a yard or two of where he was sitting—"Henry Elliott robbed you! Henry Elliott in prison! A common thief!" pointing to the newspaper, with frantic vehemence. "Is it so? And you his accuser? Oh, no! no! Never!" she exclaimed, a wild smile gleaming on her pallid countenance, at the

same time sweeping to and fro before her astounded father, with swift but stately steps, continuing, as she passed and repassed him—"No, sir! no! no! no!—Oh, for shame! for shame, father! Shame on you! shame! His father dead! His mother dead! No one to feel for him! No one to protect him! No one to love him—but—ME!"—and accompanying the last few words with a low thrilling hysterical laugh, she fell at full length insensible upon the floor.

Her father sate all this while cowering in his chair, with his hands partially elevated—feeling as though an angry angel had suddenly flashed upon his guilty privacy; and when his daughter fell, he had not the power to quit his chair and go to her relief for several seconds. A horrible suspicion crossed his mind, that she had lost her reason; and he spent the next hour and a half in a perfect ecstasy of terror. As soon, however, as the apothecary summoned to her assistance had assured him that there were, happily, no grounds for his fears—that she had had a very violent fit of hysterics, but was now recovered, and fallen asleep—he ordered the horses to his carriage, and drove off at top speed to the office of his City solicitor, Mr Newington, to instruct him to procure Elliott's instant discharge. That, of course, was utterly impossible; and Mr Hillary, almost stupified with terror, heard Mr Newington assure him that the King himself could not accomplish such an object! That Elliott must now remain in prison till the day of trial—about a month or six weeks hence—and then be brought to the bar as a felon; that there were but two courses to be pursued on that day, either not to appear against the prisoner, and forfeit all the recognisances, or

to appear in open court, and state that the charge was withdrawn, and that it had been founded entirely on a mistake. That even then, in either case, Elliott, if really innocent (Mr Newington was no party whatever to the fraudulent concoction of the charge, which was confined to Mr Hillary and Lord Scamp), would bring an action at law against Mr Hillary, and obtain, doubtless, very large damages for the disgrace, and danger, and injury which Mr Hillary's unfounded charge had occasioned him; or—more serious still—he might perhaps *indict* all the parties concerned for a conspiracy.

"But," said Mr Hillary, almost sick with fright at this alarming statement of the liabilities he had incurred, "I would not wait for an action to be brought against me—I would pay him any sum you might recommend, and that, too, instantly on his quitting the prison walls."

"But, pardon me, Mr Hillary—why all this"——

"Oh—something of very great importance has just happened at my house, which—which—gives me quite a different opinion. But I was saying I would pay him instantly"——

"But if the young man be spirited, and conscious of his innocence, and choose to set a high value upon his character, he will insist on clearing it in open court, and dare you to the proof of your charges before the whole world—at least *I* should do so in such a case."

"You *would*, would you, sir?" exclaimed Mr Hillary angrily, the big drops of perspiration standing upon his forehead.

"Certainly—certainly—I should indeed; but let that pass. I really don't see"—— continued Mr Newington, anxiously.

"D——n him, then!" cried Mr Hillary, desperately, after a pause, snapping his fingers, "let him do his worst! He can never find *me* out"——

"Eh? what?" interrupted Newington briskly, "find you out! What *can* you mean, Mr Hillary?"

"Why—a—" stammered Mr Hillary, colouring violently, adding something that neither he himself nor Mr Newington could understand. The latter had his own surmises—somewhat vague, it is true—as to the meaning of Mr Hillary's words—especially coupling them, as he did instantly, with certain expressions he had heard poor Elliott utter at the police office. He was a prudent man, however, and seeing no particular necessity for pushing his enquiries further, he thought it best to let matters remain as Mr Hillary chose to represent them.

Six weeks did poor Elliott lie immured in the dungeons of Newgate, awaiting his trial—as a felon. What pen shall describe his mental sufferings during that period? Conscious of the most exalted and scrupulous integrity—he who had never designedly wronged a human being, even in thought—whom dire necessity only had placed in circumstances which exposed him to the devilish malice of such a man as Hillary—who stood alone, and with the exception of one fond heart, friendless in the world—whose livelihood depended on his daily labour, and who had hitherto supported himself with decency, not to say dignity, amidst many grievous discouragements and hardships—this was the man pining amid the guilty gloom of the cells of Newgate, and looking forward each day with shuddering to the hour when he was to be dragged with indignity to the bar, and per-

haps found guilty on perjured evidence, of the shocking offence with which he was charged! And all this was, beyond a doubt, the wicked contrivance of Mr Hillary—the father of his Mary! And was he liable to be *transported*—to quit his country ignominiously and for ever, —to be banished with disgust and horror from the memory of her who had once so passionately loved him—as an impostor—a villain—a *felon*! He resolved not to attempt any communication with Miss Hillary, if indeed it were practicable; but to await, with stern resolution, the arrival of the hour that was either to crush him with unmerited, but inevitable infamy and ruin, or expose and signally punish those whose malice and wickedness had sought to effect his destruction. What steps could he take to defend himself? Where were his witnesses? What splendid advocate would rise on his behalf to detect and expose the perjury of those who would enter the witness-box to prove the case of his wealthy prosecutors? Poor soul! Heaven support thee against thy hour of trouble, and then deliver thee!

Miss Hillary's fearful excitement, on the evening when she discovered Elliott's situation, led to a slow fever, which confined her to her bed for nearly a fortnight; and when, at the end of that period, she again appeared in her father's presence, it was only to encounter—despite her wan looks—a repetition of the harsh and cruel treatment she had experienced ever since the day on which he had discovered her reluctance to receive the addresses of Lord Scamp. Day after day did her father *bait* her on behalf of his Lordship—with alternate coaxing and cursing: all was in vain—for when Lord Scamp at length made her a formal offer of his precious

"hand and heart," she rejected him with a quiet contempt which sent him, full of the irritation of wounded conceit, to pour his sorrows into the inflamed ear of her father.

The name that was written on her heart—that was constantly in her sleeping and waking thoughts, Elliott—she never suffered to escape her lips. Her father frequently mentioned it to her, but she listened in melancholy, oftener indignant silence. She felt convinced that there was some foul play on the part of her father, connected with Elliott's incarceration in Newgate, and could sometimes scarcely conceal, when in his presence, a shudder of apprehension. And was it likely—was it possible—that such a measure towards the unhappy, persecuted Elliott, could have any other effect on the daughter, believing him, as she did, to be pure and unspotted, than to increase and deepen her affection for him—to present his image before her mind's eye, as that of one enduring martyrdom on her account, and for her sake?

At length came on the day appointed for Elliott's trial, and it was with no little trepidation that Mr Hillary, accompanied by Lord Scamp, stepped into his carriage, and drove down to the Old Bailey, where they sat together on the bench till nearly seven o'clock, till which time the Court was engaged upon the trial of a man for forgery. Amid the bustle consequent upon the close of this long trial, Mr Hillary, after introducing his noble friend to one of the aldermen, happened to cast his eyes to the bar which had been just quitted by the death-doomed convict he had heard tried, when they fell upon the figure of Elliott, who seemed to have been placed there for some minutes, and was standing with a mournful expression of countenance, apparently lost in thought.

Even Mr Hillary's hard heart might have been touched by the altered appearance of his victim, who was greatly emaciated, and seemed scarce able to stand erect in his most humiliating position.

Mr Hillary knew well the perfect innocence of Elliott; and his own guilty soul thrilled within him, as his eye encountered for an instant the steadfast, but sorrowful eye of the prisoner. In vain did he attempt to appear conversing carelessly with Lord Scamp, who was himself too much agitated to attend to him! The prisoner pleaded Not Guilty. No counsel had been retained for the prosecution, nor did any appear for the defence. The Court, therefore, had to examine the witnesses; and, suffice it to say, that after about half an hour's trial, in the course of which Mr Hillary was called as a witness, and trembled so excessively as to call forth some encouraging expressions from the Bench, the Judge who tried the case decided that there was no evidence worth a straw against the prisoner, and consequently directed the Jury to acquit him, which they did instantly, adding their unanimous opinion, that the charge against him appeared both frivolous and malicious.

"Am I to understand, my Lord, that I leave the court freed from all taint, from all dishonour?" enquired Elliott, after the foreman had expressed the opinion of the jury.

"Certainly—most undoubtedly you do," replied the Judge.

"And if I think fit I am at liberty hereafter to expose and punish those who have wickedly conspired to place me here on a false charge?"

"Of course, you have your remedy against any one,"

replied the cautious judge, "that is, whom you can prove to have acted illegally—in the manner you have just mentioned."

Elliott darted a glance at Mr Hillary, which made his blood rush tumultuously towards his guilty heart, and bowing respectfully to the Court, withdrew from the ignominious spot which he had been so infamously compelled to occupy. He left the prison a little after eight o'clock; and wretched indeed were his feelings as the turnkey, opening the outermost of the heavy iron-bound and spiked doors, bade him farewell, gruffly adding—"Hope we mayn't meet again, my hearty!"

"I hope not, indeed!" replied poor Elliott, with a sigh; and descending the steps, found himself in the street. He scarce knew, for a moment, whither to direct his steps, staggering, overpowered with the strange feeling of suddenly recovered liberty. The sad reality of his destitution, however, soon forced itself upon him. What was to become of him? He felt wearied and faint, and almost wished he had begged the favour of sleeping, for the night, even in the dreary dungeon from which he had been but that moment released. Thus were his thoughts occupied, as he moved slowly towards Fleet Street, when a female figure approached him, muffled in a large shawl.

"Henry—dearest Henry!" murmured the half-stifled voice of Miss Hillary, stretching towards him both her hands; "so, you are free! You have escaped from the snare of the wicked! Thank God—thank God! Oh, what have we passed through, since we last met! Why, Henry, will you not speak to me? Do you forsake the daughter, for the sin of her father?"

Elliott stood staring at her as if stupified.

"Miss Hillary!" he murmured, incredulously.

"Yes—yes! I am Mary Hillary; I am your own Mary. But, oh, Henry, how altered you are! How thin! How pale and ill you look! I cannot bear to see you!" And covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"I can hardly—believe—that it is Miss Hillary," muttered Elliott. "But—your *father!*—Mr Hillary! What will he say if he sees you? Are not you ashamed of being seen talking to a wretch like me, just slipped out of Newgate?"

"Ashamed? My Henry—do not torture me! I am heart-broken for your sake! It is my own flesh and blood that I am ashamed of. That it could ever be so base!"—

Elliott suddenly snatched her into his arms, and folded her to his breast with convulsive energy.

If the malignant eye of her father had seen them at that moment!

She had obtained information that her father was gone to the Old Bailey with Lord Scamp, and soon contrived to follow them, unnoticed by the domestics. She could not get into the court, as the gallery was already filled; and had been lingering about the door for upwards of four hours, making eager enquiries from those who left the court, as to the name of the prisoner who was being tried. She vehemently urged him to accompany her direct to Bullion House, confront her father, and demand reparation for the wrongs he had inflicted. "I will stand beside you—I will never leave you—let him turn us both out of his house together!"—continued the excited girl—"I begin to loathe it—to feel indifferent about every thing it contains—except my poor, unoffending—dying

mother!—Come, come, Henry, and play the man!”—But Elliott’s good sense led him to expostulate with her, and he did so successfully, representing to her the useless peril attending such a proceeding. He forced her into the coach that was waiting for her—refused the purse which she had tried nearly twenty times to thrust into his hand—promised to make a point of writing to her the next day in such a manner as should be sure of reaching her, and after mutually affectionate adieus, he ordered the coachman to drive off as quickly as possible towards Highbury. She found Bullion House in a tumult on account of her absence.

“So—your intended victim has escaped!” exclaimed Miss Hillary, suddenly presenting herself before her father, whom Lord Scamp had but just left.

“Ah, Polly—my own Poll—and is it you, indeed?” said her father, evidently the worse for wine, approaching her unsteadily—“Come, kiss me, love!—where—where have you been, you little puss—puss—puss?”—

“*To Newgate, sir!*” replied his daughter in a quick stern tone, and retreated a step or two from her advancing father.

“N—n—ew—gate!—New—new—gate!” he echoed, as if the word had suddenly sobered him. “Well—Mary—and—what of that?” he added, drawing his breath heavily.

“To think that *your* blood flows in these veins of mine!” continued Miss Hillary, with extraordinary energy, extending her arms towards him. “I call you *father*—and yet”—she shuddered—“you are a guilty man—you have laid a snare for the innocent—Tremble, sir! tremble! Do you love your daughter? I tell you,

father, that if your design had succeeded, she would have lain dead in your house within an hour after it was told her!—Oh, what—what am I saying?—where have I been?”—She pressed her hand to her forehead; her high excitement had passed away. Her father had recovered from the shock occasioned by her abrupt re-appearance. He walked to the door, and shut it.

“Sit down, Mary,” said he, sternly, pointing to the sofa. She obeyed him in silence.

“Now, girl, tell me—are you drunk or sober?—Where have you been! What have you been doing?” he enquired with a furious air. She hid her face in her hands, and wept.

“You are driving me mad, father!” she murmured.

“Come, come!—What!—you’re playing the coward now, Miss!—Where’s all your bold spirit gone?—What! can’t you bully me any more?—Snivel on then, and beg my forgiveness!—What do you mean, Miss,” said he, extending towards her his clenched fist—“by talking about this fellow Elliott being—my VICTIM? Eh!—Tell me, you audacious hussy! you ungrateful vixen! what d’ye mean?—Say, what the d——l has come to you?” She made no answer, but continued with her face concealed in her hands. “Oh—I’m up to all this! I see what you’re after! I know you, young dare-devil!—You think you can bully me into letting you marry this brute—this beggar—this swindler!—Ah, ha! you don’t know me though! By —, but I believe you and he are in league to take my life!” He paused, gasping with rage. His daughter remained silent. “What has turned you so against *me*?” he continued, in the same violent tone and manner. “Haven’t I been a kind father to you all my”——

"Oh yes, yes, yes! dear father, I know you have!" sobbed Miss Hillary, rising and throwing herself at his feet.

"Then why are you behaving in this strange way to me?" he enquired, somewhat softening his tone. "Mary, isn't your poor mother up stairs dying; and if I lose her and you too, what's to become of me?" Miss Hillary wept bitterly. "You'd better kill your old father outright at once than kill him in this slow way! or send him to a mad-house, as you surely will! Come, Molly," he added, in a low, tremulous voice—"My own little Molly—promise me to think no more of this wretched fellow! Depend on't he'll be revenged on me yet, and do me an injury if he can! Surely the devil himself sent the man across our family peace! I don't want you to marry Lord Scamp since you don't like him—not I! It's true I have longed this many a year to marry you to some nobleman—to see you great and happy—but—if you can't fancy my Lord Scamp, why—I give him up! And if I give *him* up, won't you meet me half way, and make us all happy again by giving up this fellow so unworthy of you? He comes from a d——d bad stock, believe me! Remember—his father gambled and—cut his throat," added Hillary in a low tone, instinctively trembling as he recollected the effect produced upon Elliott by his utterance of these words on a former occasion. "Only think, Molly! *My daughter*, with a fortune—scraped together during a long life by her father's hard labour—Molly—the only thing her father loves, excepting always your poor mother—to fling herself into the arms of a common thief—a—a jail-bird—a felon—a fellow on his way to the gallows"—

"Father!" said Miss Hillary solemnly, suddenly looking up into her father's face, "You know that this is false! You know that he is acquitted—that he is innocent—you knew it from the first—that the charge was false!"

Mr Hillary, who had imagined he was succeeding in changing his daughter's determination, was immeasurably disappointed and shocked at this evidence of his failure. He bit his lips violently, and looked at her fiercely, his countenance darkening upon her sensibly. Scarce suppressing a horrible execration,—turning a deaf ear to all her passionate entreaties on behalf of Elliott—he rose, forcibly detached her arms, which were clinging to his knees, and rung the bell.

"Send Miss Hillary's maid here," said he, hoarsely. The woman with a frightened air soon made her appearance.

"Attend Miss Hillary to her room immediately," said he sternly, and his disconsolate daughter was led out of his presence to spend a night of sleepless agony.

—"On bed

Delirious flung, sleep from her pillow flies;
All night she tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds; till the grey morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch
Exanimate by love; and then, perhaps,
Exhausted nature sinks awhile to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene!"*

Many more such scenes as the one above described followed between Mr Hillary and his daughter. He

* Thomson's Seasons.

never left her from the moment he entered till he quitted his house on his return to the City. Threats, entreaties, promises—magnificent promises—all the artillery of persuasion or coercion that he knew how to use, he brought to bear upon his wearied and harassed daughter, but in vain. He suddenly took her with him into Scotland; and after spending there a wretched week or two, returned more dispirited than he had left. He hurried her to every place of amusement he could think of. Now he would give party after party, forgetful of his poor wife's situation; then let a week or longer elapse in dull and morose seclusion. Once he was carried by his passion to such a pitch of frenzy, that he actually struck her on the side of her head, and severely!—nor manifested any signs of remorse when he beheld her staggering under the blow. But why stay to particularize these painful scenes? Was *this* the way to put an end to the obstinate infatuation of his daughter? No—but to increase and strengthen it—to add fuel to the fire. Her womanly pride—her sense of justice—came—powerful auxiliaries—to support her love for the injured Elliott. She bore his ill-treatment at length with a kind of apathy. She had long lost all *respect* for her father, conscious as she was that he had acted most atrociously towards Elliott; and, presently,—after “some natural tears” for her poor mother, she became wearied of the monotonous misery she endured at Bullion House, and ready to fly from it.

Passing over an interval of a month or two, during which she continued to keep up some correspondence with Elliott, who, however, never told her the extreme misery—the absolute *want* he was suffering, since her father refused to give him a character such as would

procure his admission to another situation, and he was therefore reduced to the most precarious means possible of obtaining the scantiest livelihood. Miss Hillary, overhearing her father make arrangements for taking her on a long visit to the continent,—where he might, for all she knew, leave her to end her days in some convent—fled that night in desperation from Bullion House, and sought refuge in the humble residence of an old servant of her father's. Here she lived, for a few days, in terrified seclusion—but she might have spared her alarms, for, as she subsequently discovered, her father received the news of her flight with sullen apathy—merely exclaiming, “Well—as she has made her bed she must lie upon it.” He made no enquiries after her, nor attempted to induce her to return. When at length apprised of her residence, he did not go near the house. He had evidently given up the struggle in despair, and felt indifferent to any fate that might befall his daughter. He heard that the banns of marriage between her and Elliott were published in the parish church where her new residence was situated—but offered no opposition whatever. He affixed his signature, when required, to the document necessary to transfer to her the sum of money—£600, standing in her name in the funds, in sullen silence;—he had evidently done with her, for ever.

So this ill-fated couple became man and wife;—no one attending at the brief and cheerless ceremony but a friend of Elliott's, and the humble couple from whose house she had been married.

Elliott had commenced legal proceedings against Mr Hillary on account of his malicious prosecution. He

was certain of success, and of thereby wringing from his reluctant and wicked father-in-law a very considerable sum of money—a little fortune, in his present circumstances. With a noble forbearance, however, and yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who had not lost, in her marriage, the feelings of a daughter towards her erring, parent—he abandoned them; his solicitor writing at his desire, to inform Mr Hillary of the fact, that his client had determined to discontinue proceedings, though he had had the certainty of success before him—and that, for his wife's sake, he freely forgave Mr Hillary.

This letter was returned with an insolent message from Mr Hillary—and there the affair ended.

A few days after her marriage, Mrs Elliott received the following communication from Mr Jeffreys:—

“MADAM,

“Mr Hillary has instructed me to apprise you, as I now do with great pain, of his unalterable determination never again to recognise you as his daughter, or receive any communication, of any description, under any circumstances, from either your husband or yourself,—addressed either to Mr or Mrs Hillary; whom your undutiful and ungrateful conduct, he says, has separated from you for ever.

“He will allow to be forwarded to any place you may direct, whatever articles belonging to you may yet remain at Bullion House, on your sending a list of them to my office.

“Spare me the pain of a personal interview on the matter; and believe me when I unfeignedly lament being

the medium of communicating the intelligence contained in this letter.

“ I am, Madam,

“ Your humble servant,

“ JONATHAN JEFFREYS.

“ To Mrs Elliott.”

With a faint heart and trembling hand, assisted by her husband, she set down, after much hesitation, a few articles—books, dresses, one or two jewels, and her little dog, Cato. Him, however, Mr Hillary had caused to be destroyed the day after he discovered her flight!—The other articles were sent to her immediately; and with a bitter fit of weeping did she receive them, and read the fate of her merry little favourite, who had frisked about her to the last with sportive affection, when almost every body else scowled at and forsook her!—Thus closed for ever, as she too surely felt, all connexion and communication with her father and mother.

Elliott regarded his noble-spirited wife, as well he might, with a fondness bordering on idolatry. The vast sacrifice she had made for him overpowered him whenever he adverted to it, and inspired him, not only with the most tender and enthusiastic affection and gratitude, but with the eagerest anxiety to secure her by his own efforts at least a comfortable home. He engaged small but respectable lodgings in the Borough, to which they removed the day succeeding their marriage; and after making desperate exertions, he had the gratification of procuring a situation as clerk in a respectable mercantile house in the City, and which he had obtained through the friendly but secret services of one of the members of the firm he

had last served, and who at the same time slipped a fifty pound note into his hand. His superior qualifications secured him a salary of £90 a-year, with the promise of its increase if he continued to give satisfaction.

Thus creditably settled, the troubled couple began to breathe a little more freely; and in the course of a twelve-month, Mrs Elliott's poignant grief first declined into melancholy, which was at length mitigated into a pensive if not cheerful resignation. She moved in her little circumscribed sphere as if she had never occupied one of splendour and affluence. How happily passed the hours they spent together in the evening after he had quitted the scene of his daily labours—he reading or playing on his flute—which he did very beautifully, and she busily employed with her needle! How they loved their neat little parlour, as they sometimes involuntarily compared it—*she*, with the spacious and splendid apartments which had witnessed so much of her suffering at Bullion House—*he*, with the dark and dreadful cells of Newgate! And their Sundays! What sweet and calm repose they brought! How she loved to walk with him after church hours in the fresh and breezy places—the Parks—though a pang occasionally shot through her heart when she observed her father's carriage—he the solitary occupant—rolling leisurely past them! The very carriage in which she and her little Cato had so often driven! But thoughts such as these seldom intruded; and when they did, only drove her closer to her husband—a *pearl* to her, indeed—if it may be not irreverently spoken—*of great price*—a price she never once regretted to have paid.

Ye fond unfortunate souls! what days of darkness were in store for you!

About eighteen months after their marriage, Mrs Elliott, after a lingering and dangerous *accouchement*, gave birth to a son—the little creature I had seen. How they consulted together about the means of apprising Mr Hillary of the birth of his grandson—and fondly suggested to each other the *possibility* of its melting the stern stubborn resolution he had formed concerning them!—He heard of it, however, manifesting about as much emotion as he would on being told by his house-keeper of the kittening of his kitchen cat!—The long fond letter she had made, in her weakness, such an effort to write to him, and which poor Elliott had trudged all the way to Highbury to deliver, with tremulous hand, and a beating heart, to the porter at the lodge of Bullion House, was returned to them the next morning by the two-penny post, unopened! What delicious agony was it to them to look at—to hug to their bosoms—the little creature that had no friend—no relative on earth but them! How often did his eye open surprisedly upon his mother, when her scorching tears dropped upon his tiny face!

She had just weaned her child, and was still suffering from the effects of nursing, when there happened the first misfortune that had befallen them since their marriage. Mr Elliott was one night behind his usual hour of returning from the City—and his anxious wife's suspense was terminated by the appearance at their door of a hackney-coach, from which there stepped out a strange gentleman, who hastily knocked at the door, and returned to assist another gentleman, in lifting out the apparently inanimate figure of her husband! Pale as death, she rushed down stairs, her child in her arms, and was

saved from fainting only by hearing her husband's voice, in a low tone, assuring her that he was "not much hurt"—that he had had "a slight accident." The fact was, that in attempting most imprudently to shoot across the street between two approaching vehicles, he had been knocked down by the pole of one of them—a post-chaise; and when down, before the post-boy could stop, one of the horses had kicked the prostrate passenger upon his right side. The two humane gentlemen who had accompanied him home, did all in their power to assuage the terrors of Mrs Elliott. One of them ran for the medical man who fortunately lived close at hand; and he pronounced the case to be, though a serious one, and requiring great care, not attended with dangerous symptoms—at least at *present*.

His patient never quitted his bed for three months; at the end of which period, his employers sent a very kind message, regretting the accident that had happened, and still more, that they felt compelled to fill up his situation in their house, as he had been now so long absent, and was likely to continue absent for a much longer time: and they at the same time paid him all the salary that was due in respect of the period during which he had been absent, and a quarter's salary beyond it. Poor Elliott was thrown by this intelligence into a state of deep despondency, which was increased by his surgeon's continuing to use the language of caution, and assuring him—disheartening words!—that he must not think of engaging in active business for some time yet to come. It was after a sleepless night that he and his wife stepped into a hackney-coach, and drove to the bank to sell out £50 of their precious store, in order to liquidate some of

the heavy expenses attendant on his long illness. Alas ! what prospect was there, either of replacing what they now took, or of preserving the remainder from similar diminutions ?—It was now that his admirable wife acted indeed the part of a guardian angel ; soothing by her fond attentions his querulous and alarmed spirit—and, that she might do so, struggling hourly to conceal her own grievous apprehensions—her hopeless despondency. As may be supposed, it had now become necessary to practise the closest economy in order to keep themselves out of debt, and to avoid the necessity of constantly drawing upon the very moderate sum which yet stood in his name in the funds. How often, nevertheless, did the fond creature risk a chiding—and a severe one—from her husband—by secretly procuring for him some of the little delicacies recommended by their medical attendant, and of which no entreaties could ever prevail upon her to partake !

Some time after this, her husband recovered sufficiently to be able to walk out : but being peremptorily prohibited from engaging for some time to come in his old situation, or any one requiring similar efforts, he put an advertisement in the newspapers, offering to arrange the most involved merchant's accounts, &c. " with accuracy and expedition,"—at his own residence, and on such very moderate terms as soon brought him several offers of employment. He addressed himself with a natural but most imprudent eagerness to the troublesome and exhausting task he had undertaken : and the consequence was, that he purchased the opportunity of a month's labour, by a twelvemonth's incapacitation for *all* labour ! A dreadful blow this was, and borne by neither of them.

with their former equanimity. Mrs Elliott renewed her hopeless attempt to soften the obduracy of her father's heart. She waited for him repeatedly in the street at the hours of his quitting and returning to the City, and attempted to speak to him, but he hurried from her as from a common street-beggar. She wrote letter after letter, carrying some herself, and sending others by the post, by which latter medium all were invariably returned to her! She began to think with horror of her father's inexorable disposition—and her prayers to heaven for its interference in her behalf—or at least the faith that inspired them, became fainter and fainter.

Mr Hillary's temper had become ten times worse than before, since his daughter's departure, owing to that as well as sundry other causes. Several of his speculations in business proved to be very unfortunate, and to entail harassing consequences, which kept him constantly in a state of feverish irritability. Poor Mrs Hillary continued still a hopeless paralytic, deprived of the powers both of speech and motion: all chance, therefore, of *her* precious intercession was too probably for ever at an end. In vain did Mrs Elliott strive to interest several of her relatives in her behalf: they *professed* too great a dread of Mr Hillary to attempt interfering in such a delicate and dangerous matter; and *really* had a very obvious interest in continuing, if not increasing, the grievous and unnatural estrangement existing between him and his daughter. There was one of them—a Miss Gubbley, a maiden aunt, or cousin of Mrs Elliott, that had wormed herself completely into Mr Hillary's confidence, and having been once a kind of housekeeper in the establishment, now reigned supreme at Bullion

House: an artful, selfish, vulgar person, an object to Mrs Elliott of mingled terror and disgust. This was the being that,

“ toad-like, sate squatting at the ear ”

of her father, probably daily suggesting every hateful consideration that could tend to widen the breach already existing between him and his daughter. This creature, too, had poor Mrs Elliott besieged with passionate and humiliating entreaties, till they were suddenly and finally checked by a display of such intolerable insolence and heartlessness as determined Mrs Elliott, come what would, to make no further efforts in *that* quarter. She returned home, on the occasion just alluded to, worn out in body and mind. A copious flood of tears, accompanying her narration to her husband of what had happened, relieved her excitement; she took her child into her arms, and his playful little fingers unconsciously touching the deep responsive chords of a mother's heart, she forgot, in the ecstasy of the moment, as she folded him to her bosom, all that had occurred to make her unhappy and add to the gloom of their darkening prospects!

Closer and closer now became their retrenchments; every source of expenditure being cut off that was not absolutely indispensable. None, she told me, occasioned them a greater pang than giving up their little pew in — Church, and betaking themselves, Sunday after Sunday, to the humbler and more appropriate sittings provided in the aisle. But was this their communion and contact with poverty unfavourable to devotion? No. The serpent PRIDE was crushed, and dared not lift his bruised head to disturb or alarm! God then drew near to the deserted couple, “ weary, and heavy laden,” and

"cast out" by their *earthly* father! Yes—there she experienced a holy calm—a resignation—a reality in the services and duties of religion—which she had never known when sitting amid the trappings of ostentatious wealth, in the gorgeous pew of her father!

They were obliged to seek cheaper lodgings—moderate as was the rent required for those they had so long occupied—where they might practise a severer economy than they chose to exhibit in the presence of those who had known them when such sacrifices were not necessary—and which had also the advantage of being in the neighbourhood of a person who had promised Elliott occasional employment as a collector of rents, &c., as well as the balancing of his books every month. Long before his health warranted, did he undertake these severe labours, driven to desperation by a heavy and not over-reasonable bill delivered him by his medical attendant, and of which he pressed for the payment. With an aching heart poor Elliott sold out sufficient to discharge it, and resolved at all hazards to recommence his labours; for there was left only £70 or £80 in the Bank—and he shuddered when he thought of it!—They had quitted these their second lodgings for those in which I found them about three months before her first visit to me, in order to be near another individual—himself an accountant, who had promised to employ Elliott frequently as a kind of deputy, or *fag*. His were the books piled before poor Elliott when first I saw him! Thus had he been engaged, to the great injury of his health, for many weeks—his own mental energy and determination flattering him with a delusive confidence in his physical vigour! Poor Mrs Elliott also had contrived, being not

unacquainted with ornamental needle-work, to obtain some employment of that description. Heavy was her heart as she sat toiling beside her husband—who was busily engaged in such a manner as would not admit of their conversing together—when her thoughts wandered over the scenes of their past history, and anticipated their gloomy prospects. Was she now paying the fearful penalty of disobedience? But where was the sin she had committed in forming an honest and ardent attachment to one whom she was satisfied was every way her equal, save in wealth? How could he have a right to dictate to her heart who should be an object of its affections? To dispose of it as of an article of merchandise—Had he any right thus to consign her to perpetual misery? To unite her to a titled villain merely to gratify his weak pride and ambition—Had she not a right to resist such an attempt?—The same Scripture that has said, *children, obey your parents*, has also said, *fathers, provoke not your children to wrath*. But had she not been too precipitate—or unduly obstinate in adhering to the man her father abhorred?—Ought any thing—alas!—to have caused her to fly from her suffering mother? Oh, what might have been *her* sufferings! But surely nothing could justify or extenuate the unrelenting spirit which actuated her father! And that father she knew to have acted basely—to have played the part of a devil towards the man whom he hated—perhaps, nay too probably, he was meditating some equally base and desperate scheme concerning herself! She silently appealed to God from amidst this conflict of her thoughts and feelings, and implored his forgiveness of her rash conduct. Her agonies were heightened by

THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT THERE existed reasons for self-
 punishment. But she thought of—she looked at—her
 husband: and her heart said her, that she should act
 differently were the worst to happen!

THE FIRST YEAR WAS THE VIRTUOUS unhappy couple—he
 was a man of health and strength when that health was most pre-
 cious—was torn with labour and anxiety, and
 was driven by the same to wretchedness into
 the arms of a woman who was considerably advanced in preg-
 nancy—was becoming less capable of the labour which
 was becoming daily more essential—with scarcely
 a day upon which he was not in the most desperate emergency:
 —such was the dreadful situation of Mr and Mrs Elliott
 soon after the period of their first introduction to them.
 I was at the time engaged to one of the most interesting and
 melancholical narratives—the annals of human suffer-
 ing could supply the secret—secretly resolved to take upon
 myself the responsibility of appealing to Mr Hillary in
 regard to the honour of humanity my
 efforts were entirely unavailing.

At the end of the twelvemonth
 was removed to a spacious and
 Square, in the neighbourhood
 and where—strange coincidence!—I
 attend Mrs Hillary, who at length
 the close of her long-protracted
 Hillary had become quite an altered
 of his daughter. Lord Scamp
 freely into the society of persons
 who welcomed into their circles the
 a fortune; and he found, in the
 amusement of fashionable so-

ciety, a refuge from reflection, from those "compunctious visitings of remorse" which made his solitude dreadful and insupportable. I found him just such a man as I have already had occasion to describe him; a vain, vulgar, selfish, testy, overbearing old man; one of the most difficult and dangerous persons on earth to deal with in such a negotiation as that I had so rashly, but Heaven knows with the best intentions, undertaken.

"Well, Mr Hillary," said I, entering the drawing-room, where he was standing alone, with his hands in his pockets, at the window, watching some disturbance in the square—"I am afraid I can't bring you any better news about Mrs Hillary. She weakens hourly!"

"Ah, poor creature, I see she does—indeed!" he replied sighing, quitting the window, and offering me one of the many beautiful chairs that stood in the splendid apartment. "Well, she's been a good wife to me, I must say—a *very* good wife, and I've always thought and said so." Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his ample white waistcoat, he walked up and down the room. "Well, poor soul! she's had all that money could get her, doctor, however, and she knows it—that's a comfort—but it an't *money* can keep death off, is it?"

"No, indeed, Mr Hillary; but it can mitigate some of its terrors. What a consolation will it be for you hereafter, to reflect that Mrs Hillary has had every thing your noble fortune could procure for her!"—

"Ay, and no grudging neither! I'd do ten times what I have done—what's money to me? so—poor Poll, and she's going! We never had a real quarrel in our lives!" he continued, in a somewhat subdued tone. "I shall miss her when she is gone!—I shall indeed!"

could find many to fill her place, if I had a mind, I'll warrant me—but I—I—poor Poll!”

* * “Yes,” I said presently, in answer to some general remark he had made, “we medical men do certainly see the worst side of human life. Pain—illness—death—are bad enough of themselves—but when *poverty* steps in too”——

“Ay, I dare say—bad enough, as you say—bad enough—a-hem!”

“I have this very day seen a mournful instance of accumulated human misery; poverty, approaching starvation, illness, distress of mind.—Ah, Mr Hillary, what a scene I witnessed yesterday!” I continued, with emotion; “a man who is well-born, who has seen better”——

“Better days—ay, exactly. “Double-refined misery, as they would say in the City. By the way, what a valuable charity that is—I'm a subscriber to it—for the relief of decayed tradesmen! One feels such a pleasure in it! I dare say now—I do believe—let me see—£200 would not cover what I get rid of one way or another in this kind of way every year—by the way, doctor, I'll ring for tea; you'll take a cup?” I nodded; and in a few minutes a splendid tea-service made its appearance.

“Do you know, doctor, I've some notion of being remembered after I'm gone, and it has often struck me that if I were to leave what I have to build an hospital, or something of that sort, in this part of the town, it wouldn't be amiss”——

“A noble ambition, sir, indeed!—But, as I was observing, the poor people I saw yesterday—such misery! such fortitude!”

"Ah, yes! Proper sort of people, just the right sort, to put into—a-hem!—*Hillary's Hospital*. It don't sound badly, does it?"

"Excellently well. But the fact is"—I observed that he was becoming rather fidgety, but I was resolved not to be beaten from my point—"I'm going, in short, Mr Hillary, to take a liberty which nothing could warrant but"——

"You're going to *beg*, doctor, now an't you?" he interrupted briskly; "but the fact is, my maxim has long been never to give a farthing in charity that any one shall know of but two people: I, and the people I give to. That's *my* notion of true charity; and, besides, it saves one a vast deal of trouble. But if *you* really think—if it really is a deserving case—why—a-hem! I *might* perhaps—Dr —— is so well known for his charitable turn—Now an't this the way you begin upon *all* your great patients?" he continued, with an air of supreme complacency. I bowed and smiled, humouring his vanity. "Well, in such a case—hem! hem!—I might, once in a way, break in upon my rule," and he transferred his left hand from his waistcoat to his breeches-pocket, "so there's a guinea for you. But don't on any account name it to any one. Don't, doctor. I don't want to be talked about; and we people that are known do get so many"——

"But, Mr Hillary, surely I may tell my poor friends to whom your charity is destined, the *name* of the generous"——

"Oh, ay! Do as you please for the matter of that. Who are they? What are they? Where do they live? I'm governor of ——," I trembled.

"They live at present in —— Street ; but I doubt, poor things, whether they can stop there much longer, for their landlady is becoming very clamorous"——

"Ah, the old story ! the old story ! Landlords are generally, especially the smaller sort, such tyrants, an't they ?"

"Yes, too frequently such is the case ! But I was going to tell you of these poor people. They have not been married many years, and they married, very unfortunately,"—Mr Hillary, who had for some time been sitting down on the sofa, here rose and walked rather more quickly than he had been walking before,—“contrary to the wishes of their family, who have forsaken them, and don't know what their sufferings now are—how virtuous—how patient they are ! And they have got a child too, that will soon, I fear, be crying for the bread it may not get.” Mr Hillary was evidently becoming disturbed. I saw that a little of the colour had fled from about his upper lip, but he said nothing, nor did he seem disposed to interrupt me. “I'm sure, by the way,” I continued, as calmly as I could, “that if I could but prevail upon their family to see them, before it is too late, that explanations might”——

“What's the *name* of your friends, sir ?” said Mr Hillary, suddenly stopping, and standing opposite to me, with his arms almost a-kimbo and his eyes looking keenly into mine.

“Elliott, sir”——

“I—I thought as much, sir !” he replied, dashing the perspiration from his forehead ; “I knew what you were driving at ! D——n it, sir—I see it all ! You came here to insult me,—you did, sir !” His agitation increased.

"Forgive me, Mr Hillary; I assure you"——

"No, sir! I won't hear you, sir! I've heard enough, sir! Too much, sir! You've said enough, sir, to show me what sort of a man you are, sir! D——n it, sir—it's too bad"——

"You mistake me, Mr Hillary," said I, calmly.

"No I don't, sir, but you've cursedly mistaken *me*, sir. If you know those people, and choose to take up their—to—to—patronise, do, sir, d——n it! if you like, and haven't any thing better to do"——

"Forgive me, sir, if I have hurt your feelings"——

"Hurt my feelings, sir? What d'ye mean, sir? Every man hurts my feelings that insults me, sir, and you have insulted me!"

"How, sir?" I enquired, sternly, in my turn. "Oblige me, sir, by explaining these extraordinary expressions!"

"You know well enough! I see through it. But if you—really, sir—you've got a guinea of mine, sir, in your pocket. Consider it your fee for this visit; the last I'll trouble you to pay, sir!" he stuttered, almost unintelligible with fury.

I threw his guinea upon the floor, as if its touch were pollution. "Farewell, Mr Hillary," said I, deliberately, drawing on my gloves. "May your death-bed be as calm and happy as that I have this day attended up stairs for the last time."

He looked at me earnestly, as if staggered by the reflections I had suggested, and turned very pale. I bowed haughtily, and retired. As I drove home, my heated fancy struck out a scheme for shaming or terrifying the old monster I had quitted into something like pity or

repentance, by attacking and exposing him in some newspaper; but by the next morning I perceived the many objections there were to such a course. I need hardly say that I did not communicate to the Elliotts the fact of my attempted intercession with Mr Hillary.

It was grievous to see the desperate but unavailing struggle made by both of them to retrieve their circumstances and provide against the expensive and trying time that was approaching. He was slaving at his account-books from morning to midnight, scarce allowing himself a few minutes for his meals; and she had become a mere fag to a fashionable milliner, undertaking all such work as could be done at her own residence, often sitting up half the night, and yet earning the merest trifle. Then she had also to look after her husband and child, for they could not afford to keep a regular attendant. Several articles of her husband's dress and her own, and almost all that belonged to the child, she often washed at night with her own hands!

As if these unfortunate people were not sufficiently afflicted already—as if any additional ingredient in their cup of sorrow were requisite—symptoms of a more grievous calamity than had yet befallen poor Elliott, began to exhibit themselves in him. His severe and incessant application, by day and night, coupled with the perpetual agitation and excitement of his nervous system, began to tell upon his eyesight. I found him, on one of my morning visits, labouring under great excitement; and on questioning him, I feared he had but too good reason for his alarm, as he described, with fearful distinctness, certain sensations and appearances which infallibly betokened, in my opinion, after examining his

eyes, the presence of incipient *amaurosis* in both eyes. He spoke of deep-seated pains in the orbits—perpetual sparks and flashes of light—peculiar haloes seen around the candle—dimness of sight—and several other symptoms, which I found, on enquiry, had been for some time in existence, but he had never thought of noticing them till they forced themselves upon his startled attention.

“Oh, my God!” he exclaimed, clasping his hands, and looking upwards, “spare my sight! Oh, spare my sight—or what will become of me? Beggary seems to be my lot—but *blindness* to be added!” He paused, and looked the image of despair.

“Undoubtedly I should deceive you, Mr Elliott,” said I, after making several further enquiries, “if I were to say that there was no danger in your case. Unfortunately, there does exist ground for apprehending that, unless you abstain, and in a great measure, from so severely taxing your eyesight as you have of late, you will run the risk of permanently injuring it.”

“Oh, doctor! it is easy to talk,” he exclaimed, with involuntary bitterness, “of my ceasing to use and try my sight; but how am I to do it? How am I to live? Tell me *that*! Will money drop from the skies into my lap, or bread into the mouths of my wife and child! What is to become of us? Merciful God! and just at this time, too! My wife pregnant”—I thanked God she was not present!—“our last penny almost slipping from our hands—and I, who should be the stay and support of my family, becoming BLIND! Oh, God—oh, God, what frightful crimes have I committed, to be punished thus? Would I had been transported or hanged,” he added, suddenly, “when the old ruffian

threw me into Newgate! But"—he turned ghastly pale—"if I were to die *now*, what good could it do?" At that moment the slow, heavy, wearied step of his wife was heard upon the stairs, and her entrance put an end to her husband's exclamations. I entreated him to intermit, at least for a time, his attentions to business, and prescribed some active remedies, and he promised to obey my instructions. Mrs Elliott sat beside me with a sad exhausted air, which touched me almost to tears. What a situation—what a prospect was hers! How was she to prepare for her coming confinement? How procure the most ordinary comforts—the necessary attendance? Deprived as her husband and child must be for a time of her affectionate and vigilant attentions, what was to become of them? Who supply her place? Her countenance too plainly showed that all these topics constantly agitated her mind.

A day or two after this interview I brought them the intelligence I had seen in the newspapers, of Mrs Hilary's death, which I communicated to them very carefully, fearful of the effect it might produce upon Mrs Elliott in her critical situation. She wept bitterly; but the event had been too long expected by her to occasion any violent exhibition of grief. As they lay awake that night in melancholy converse, it suddenly occurred to Mrs Elliott that the event which had just happened might afford them a last chance of regaining her father's affections, and they determined to seize the opportunity of appealing to his feelings when they were softened by his recent bereavement. The next morning the wretched couple set out on their dreary pilgrimage to ——— Square—it having been agreed that Elliott

should accompany her to within a door or two of her father's house, and there await the issue of her visit. With slow and trembling steps, having relinquished his arm, she approached the dreaded building, whose large windows were closed from the top to the bottom of the house. The sight of them overcame her; and she paused for a moment, holding by the area railings.

What dark and bitter thoughts and recollections crowded in a few seconds through her mind! Here, in this great mansion, was her living—her tyrannical—her mortally-offended father; here lay the remains of her poor good mother—whom she had fled from—whose last thoughts might perhaps have been about her persecuted daughter—and that daughter was now trembling like a guilty thing before the frowning portals of her widowed, and, it might be, inexorable father. She felt very faint, and beckoning hastily to her husband, he stepped forward to support her, and led her from the door. After slowly walking round the square, she returned, as before, to the gloomy mansion of her father, ascended the steps, and, with a shaking hand, pulled the bell.

"What do you want, young woman?" enquired a servant from the area.

"I wish to see Joseph—is he at home?"—she replied, in so faint a voice, that the only word audible in the area was that of Joseph—the porter—who had entered into her father's service in that capacity two or three years before her marriage. In a few minutes Joseph made his appearance at the hall-door, which he softly opened.

"Joseph!—Joseph! I'm very ill," she murmured,

leaning against the door-post—"let me sit in your chair for a moment."

"Lord have mercy on me—my young mistress!" exclaimed Joseph, casting a hurried look behind him, as if terrified at being seen in conversation with her—and then hastily stepping forward he caught her in his arms, for she had fainted. He placed her in his great covered chair, and called one of the female servants, who brought up with her, at his request, a glass of water—taking the stranger to be some relative or friend of the porter's. He forced a little into her mouth—the maid loosened her bonnet-string, and after a few minutes she uttered a deep sigh, and her consciousness returned.

"Don't hurry yourself, Miss—*Ma'am* I mean," stammered the porter, in a low tone,—“You can stay here a little—I don't think any one's stirring but us servants—you see, ma'am, though I suppose you know—my poor mistress”——She shook her head and sobbed.

"Yes, Joseph, I know it!—Did she—did she—die easily?" enquired Mrs Elliott, in a faint whisper, grasping his hand.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered, in a low tone, "poor lady, she'd been so long ailing, that no doubt death wasn't any thing partic'lar to her, like—and so she went out at last like the snuff of a candle, as one might say—poor old soul!—we'd none of us—not my master even—heard the sound of her voice for months, not to say years even!"

"And my—my father—how does *he*"——

"Why he takes on about it, ma'am, certainly—but, you see he's been so long expecting of it!"

"Do you think, Joseph," said Mrs Elliott, hardly able to make herself heard—"that—that my father would be *very*—very angry—if he knew I was here—would he—see me?"

"Lord, ma'am!" exclaimed the porter, alarm overspreading his features. "It's not possible!—you can't think how stern he is! You should have heard what orders he gave us all about keeping you out of the house! I know 'tis a dreadful hard case, ma'am, he continued," wiping a tear from his eye, "and many, and many's the time we've all cried in the kitchen about—hush!" he stopped, and looked towards the stairs apprehensively—"never mind, ma'am,—it's nobody!—But won't you come down and sit in the housekeeper's room? I'm sure the good old soul will rather like to see you than otherwise, and then, you know, you can slip out of the area gate and be gone in no time!"

"No Joseph," replied Mrs Elliott, with as much energy as her weakness would admit of,—“I will wait outside the street-door, if you think there is any danger—while you go and get this letter taken up stairs, and say I am waiting for an answer!” He took the letter, held it in his hand hesitatingly—and shook his head.

"Oh, take it, good Joseph!" said Mrs Elliott, with a look that would have softened a heart of stone—"It is only to ask for mourning for my mother! I have no money to purchase any!" His eyes filled with tears.

"My poor dear young mistress!" he faltered—his lip quivered, and he paused—"It's more than my place is worth—but—I'll take it, nevertheless—that I will, come what will, ma'am! See if I dont! You see, ma'am," dropping his voice, and looking towards the staircase—

"it isn't so much the old gentleman, after all, neither—but it's—it's—Miss Gubbley that I'm afraid of!—It is she, in my mind, that keeps him so cruel hard against you! She has it all her own way here! You should see how she orders us servants about, ma'am, and has her eyes into every thing that's going on, she's like an old ferret. But—I'll go and take the letter any how—and don't you go out of doors, unless you hear me cry—'Hem!'—on the stairs!" She promised to attend to this hint, as did also the female servant whom he left with her, and Joseph disappeared. The mention of Miss Gubbley excited the most painful and disheartening thoughts in the mind of Mrs Elliott. Possibly it was now the design of this woman to strike a grand blow—and force herself into the place so recently vacated by poor Mrs Hillary! Mrs Elliott's heart beat fast, after she had waited for some minutes in agonizing anxiety and suspense, as she heard the footsteps of Joseph hastily descending the stairs.

"Well, Joseph,"—she whispered, looking eagerly at him.

"I can't get to see master, ma'am, though I've tried—I have indeed, ma'am! I thought it would be so! Miss Gubbley has been giving it me, ma'am—she says it will cost me my place to dare to do such an *oudacious* thing again—and I told her you was below here, ma'am, and she might see you—but she tossed her head, and said it was of a piece with all your other shameful behaviour to your poor, broken-hearted father—she did, ma'am,"—Mrs Elliott began to sob bitterly—"and she wouldn't on any account whatsoever have him shocked at such a sad time
 "that she knows it would be no use your
 "voice quivered—"and she says, as how"—

he could hardly go on—"you should have thought of all this long ago—and that only a month ago she heard master say it was all your own fault if you came to ruin—and as you'd made your bed you must lie on it—her very words, ma'am—but she's sent you a couple of guineas, ma'am, on condition that you don't on no account trouble master again—and—and"—he continued, his tears overflowing—"I've been so bold as to make it *three*, ma'am—and I hope its no offence, ma'am, me being but a servant," trying to force something wrapped up in paper into the hand of Mrs Elliott, who had listened motionless and in dead silence to all he had been saying.

"Joseph!"—at length she exclaimed, in a very low but distinct and solemn tone, stretching out her hands—"if you do not wish to see me die—help me, help me—to my knees!" And with his assistance, and that of the female servant, she sunk gently down upon her knees upon the floor, where he partly supported her. She slowly clasped her hands together upon her bosom, and looked upwards—her eye was tearless, and an awful expression settled upon her motionless features. Joseph involuntarily fell upon his knees beside her, shaking like an aspen leaf—his eyes fixed instinctively upon hers—and the sobs of several of the servants, who had stolen silently to the top of the kitchen stairs, to gaze at this strange scene, were the only sounds that were audible. After having remained in this position for some moments, she rose from her knees slowly and in silence.

"When will my mother be buried?" she presently enquired.

"Next Saturday," whispered Joseph, "at two o'clock."

"Where?"

"At St ——'s, ma'am."

"Farewell, Joseph! You have been very kind," said she, rising, and moving slowly to the door.

"Won't you let me get you a little of something warm, ma'am? You do look so bad, ma'am—so pale—and I'll fetch it from down stairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph—I am better!—and Mr Elliott is waiting for me at the outside."

"Poor gentleman!" sobbed Joseph, turning his head aside, that he might dash a tear from his eye. He strove again to force into her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph—I am very destitute, but yet—Providence will not let me starve. I cannot take it from *you*; hers I will not—I ought not!"

With this the door was opened; and with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and with tremulous and agitated tone and gestures enquired the result of her application, and placing his arm around her—for he felt how heavily she leaned against him—gently led her towards home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us *THERE*," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there *is* hope, dearest, with Him who invites the weary and heavy laden—who seems to have withdrawn from us, but has not forsaken us," replied his wife tenderly, and with unwonted cheerfulness in her manner—"I feel—I know—*HE* tells me that He will not suffer us to sink in the deep waters! He heard my prayer,

Henry—and He will answer it, wisely and well ! But let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs ——. Come, love !” Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife’s reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow ; and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodgings. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to her bosom ; *he* kissed him—but coldly—absently—as it were mechanically. Placing upon his forehead the silk shade which my wife had sent to him, at my request, the day before—as well to relieve his eyes, as to conceal their troubled expression, he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

Scarce £20 now remained of the £600 with which they were married ; his wife’s little earnings were to be of course for a while suspended ; he was prohibited, at the peril of blindness, from the only species of employment he could obtain ; the last ray of hope concerning Hillary’s reconciliation was extinguished ;—and all this when their expenses were on the eve of being doubled—or trebled—when illness—or death—

It was well for Mrs Elliot that her husband had placed that silk shade upon his forehead !

During his absence the next morning at the Ophthalmic Infirmary, whither, at my desire, he went twice a-week to receive the advice of Mr ——, the eminent

"I am—very kind."

"Thank you, Joseph: You have been very kind," said she, turning and moving slowly to the door.

"Will you let me get you a little of something warm to drink? You look so bad, ma'am—so pale—and I'll bring it from down stairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph—I am better"—and Mr Elliott is waiting for me at the parlour."

"Thank you, ma'am!" said Joseph, turning his head back, and he might have had a tear from his eye. He strove again to move, but her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph—I am very destitute, but yet—Providence will not let me starve. I cannot take it from you; but I will not—I ought not!"

As it was the door was opened; and with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and with tremulous and agitated voice and gestures enquired the result of her application, and raising his arm around her—for he felt how heavily she leaned against him—gently led her towards home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us there," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there is hope, dear," said she, her voice weary and heavy, but from us, but for dear, and what?"

"I feel—"

to sink—

Henry—and He will answer it, wisely and well! But let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs ——. Come, love!" Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife's reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow; and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodgings. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to her bosom; he kissed him—but coldly—absently—as it were mechanically. Placing upon his forehead the silk shade which my wife had sent to him, at my request, the day before—as well to relieve his eyes, as to conceal their troubled expression, he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

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or death—

Not that her husband had

forehead!

arning at the Ophthal-

sire, he went

—, the

oculist, I called and seized the opportunity of placing in Mrs Elliott's hands, with unspeakable satisfaction, the sum of £40, which my good wife had chiefly collected among her friends ; and as Mrs Elliott read, or rather attempted to read, for her eyes were filled with tears, the affectionate note written to her by my wife, who begged that she would send her little boy to our house till she should have recovered from her confinement, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed—"Has not God heard my prayers !—Dearest doctor ! Heaven will reward you ! What news for my poor heart-broken husband when he returns home from the Infirmary—weary and disheartened ! * * * *

"And now, doctor, shall I confide to you a plan I have formed ?" said Mrs Elliott, looking earnestly at me—"Don't try to persuade me against putting it into practice ; for my mind is made up, and nothing can turn me from my purpose." I looked at her with surprise. "You know we have but this one room and the little closet—for what else is it ?—where we sleep ; and where must my husband and child be when I am confined ? Besides, we cannot, even with all your noble kindness to us, afford to have proper—the most ordinary attendance." She paused—I listened anxiously.

"So—I've been thinking—could you not"—she hesitated, struggling with violent emotion—"could you not get me admitted"—her voice trembled—"into—the Lying-in Hospital ?"—I shook my head, unable at the moment to find utterance.

"It has cost me a struggle—Providence seems, however, to have led me to the thought ! I shall there be no expense to my husband—and shall have, I understand, excellent attendance."

"My poor dear madam," I faltered, "you must forgive me—but I cannot bear to think of it."—In spite of my struggles the swelling tears at length burst from my laden eyes. She buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly. "My husband can hear of me every day, and, with God's blessing upon us, perhaps in a month's time, we may both meet in better health and spirits. And if—if—if it would not inconvenience Mrs ——— or yourself, to let my little Henry"—she could get no further, and burst again into a fit of passionate weeping. I promised her, in answer to her reiterated entreaties, after many remonstrances, that I would immediately take steps to ensure her an admission into the Lying-in Hospital at any moment she might require it.

"But, my dear madam—your husband—Mr Elliott—depend upon it he will never hear of all this—he will never permit it—I feel perfectly certain."

"Ah, doctor—I know he would not; but he shall not know anything about my intentions till I am safely lodged in the—the hospital. I intend to leave without his knowing where I am gone, some day this week—for I feel satisfied"—she paused and trembled—"when he returns from the Infirmary on Friday he will find a letter from me, telling him all my little scheme, and may God incline him to forgive me for what I am doing. I know he loves me, however, too fondly to make me unhappy!"

The next morning, my wife accompanied me to their lodgings, for the purpose of taking home with her little Elliott. A sad scene it was—but Elliott, whom his wife had easily satisfied of the prudence of thus disposing of the child during the period of her confinement, bore it

manfully. He carried the child down to my carriage, and resigned him into the hands of my wife and servant, after many fond caresses, with an air of melancholy resolution ; promising to call daily and see him while on his visit at my house. I strove to console him under this temporary separation from his child, and to impress upon him the necessity of absolute quiet and repose, in order to give due effect to the very active treatment under which he had been placed for the complaint in his eyes ; this I did in order to prepare him for the second stroke meditated to be inflicted upon him on the ensuing Friday by his wife, and to reconcile him, by anticipation as it were, to their brief separation. When once the decisive step had been taken, I felt satisfied that he would speedily see the propriety of it.

It was wonderful to see how Mrs Elliott, during the interval between this day, and the Friday appointed for her entrance into the Lying-in Hospital, sustained her spirits. Her manner increased in tenderness towards her husband, who evinced a corresponding energy of sympathy and affection towards her. His anxieties had been to a considerable extent allayed by the seasonable addition to his funds already spoken of ; but he expressed an occasional surprise at the absence of any preparations for the event, which both of them believed to be so near at hand.

On the Friday morning, about half an hour after her husband had set out for the Ophthalmic Infirmary as usual, a hackney-coach drew up to the door of his lodgings, with a female attendant, sent by my directions from the Lying-in Hospital. I also made my appearance within a few minutes of the arrival of the coach : and poor Mrs Elliott, after having carefully arranged and disposed of

the few articles of her own apparel which she intended to leave behind her, and given the most anxious and repeated instructions to the woman of the house to be attentive to Mr Elliott in her absence—sat down and shed many tears as she laid upon the table a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to her husband, containing the information of her departure and destination. When her agitation had somewhat subsided, she left the room—perhaps, she felt, *for ever*—entered into the coach, and was soon safely lodged in the Lying-in Hospital.

The letter to her husband was as follows—for the melancholy events which will presently be narrated brought this with other documents into my possession.

“MY SWEET LOVE,

“The hour of my agony is approaching; and Providence has pointed out to me a place of refuge. I cannot, dearest Henry—I cannot think of adding to your sufferings by the sight of mine! When all is over—as I trust it will be soon, and happily—then we shall be re-united, and God grant us happier days! Oh, do not be grieved or angry, Henry, at the step I am taking. I have done it for the best—it will be for the best, depend upon it. Dr —— will tell you how skilfully and kindly they treat their patients at the Lying-in Hospital, to which I am going. Oh, Henry! you are the delight of my soul! The more grief and bitterness we have seen together, surely the more do we love one another. *Oh, how I love you!*—How I prayed in the night while you, dearest, were sleeping—that the Almighty would bless you and our little Harry, and be merciful to *me*, for your sakes, and bring us all together again! I shall pray for you, my love—my own love! every hour that we are away! Bear up a little longer,

Henry! God has not deserted us—he will not—he cannot, if we do not desert him. I leave you, dearest, my Bible and prayer-book—*oh, do read them!* Kiss my little Harry in my name, every day. How kind are Dr —, and Mrs —! Go out and enjoy the fresh air, and do not sit fretting at home, love, nor try your eyes with reading or writing till I come back. I can hardly lay by my pen, but the coach is come for me, and I must tear myself away. Farewell, then, my dear, dear, darling Henry; but only for a little while. Your doating wife, Mary.

“P.S.—The socks I have been knitting for Harry are in the drawer near the window. You had better take them to Dr —’s to-morrow, as I forgot to send them with Harry in the bustle of his going, and he will want them. Dr — says you can come and see me every day before I am taken ill. Do come.”

I called in the evening—according to the promise I had made to Mrs Elliott—on her husband, to see how he bore the discovery of his wife’s sudden departure.

“How is Mr Elliott?” I enquired of the woman of the house, who opened the door. “Is he at home?”

“Why, yes—but he’s in a sad way, sir, indeed, about Mrs Elliott’s going. He’s eaten nothing all day.”

He was sitting at a table when I entered, with a solitary candle, and Mrs Elliott’s letter lying open before him.

“Oh! doctor, is not this worse than death?” he exclaimed. “Am I not left alone to be the prey of Satan?”

“Come, come, Mr Elliott, moderate your feelings! Learn the lesson your incomparable wife has taught you—patience and resignation.”

"It is a heavenly lesson. But can a fiend learn it?" he replied vehemently, in a tone and with an air that quite startled me. "Here I am left alone by God and man to be the sport of devils, and I AM!—What curse is there that has not fallen, or is falling upon me? I feel assured," he continued, gloomily, "that my Mary is taken from me for ever. Oh, do not tell me otherwise. I feel—I know it! I shall never see her again! I shall never hear her blessed voice again! I have brought ruin upon her! I have brought her to beggary by an insane, a wicked attachment! The curses of disobedience to parents are upon both of us! Yet our misery might have touched any heart except that of her fiendish father. Ah! he buries her mother to-morrow! To-morrow, then, I will be there! The earth shall not fall upon her before he looks upon me! How I will make the old man shake beside the grave he must soon drop into!"—He drew a long breath—"Let him curse me!—Curse her—Curse us both!—Curse our child! Then and there"——

"*The curse causeless shall not come,*" I interrupted.

"Ay, causeless! That's the thing! Causeless!" He paused. "Forgive me," he added, after a heavy sigh, resuming his usual manner: "doctor, I've been *raving*, and can you wonder at it? Poor Mary's letter (here it is) has almost killed me! I have been to the place where she is, but I dare not go in to see her. Oh! doctor, *will* she be taken care of?" suddenly seizing my hand with convulsive energy.

"The very greatest care will be taken of her—the greatest skill in London will be instantly at her command in case of the slightest necessity for it—as well as every possible comfort and convenience that her situation

can require. If it will be any consolation to you, I assure you I intend visiting her myself every day."—And by these means I at length succeeded in restoring something like calmness to him. The excitement occasioned by his unexpected discovery of his wife's absence, and its touching reason, had been aggravated by the unfavourable opinion concerning his sight which had been that morning expressed—alas, I feared, but too justly—by the able and experienced oculist under whose care he was placed. He had in much alarm heard Mr —— ask him several questions respecting peculiar and secret symptoms and sensations about his eyes, which he was forced to answer in the affirmative ; and the alarming effect of these enquiries was not dissipated by the cautious replies of Mr —— to his questions as to the chances of ultimate recovery. I assured him that nothing on earth could so effectually serve him as the cultivation of calm and composed habits of mind ; for that the affection of his eyes depended almost entirely upon the condition of his nervous system. I got him to promise me that he would abandon his wild and useless purpose of attending the funeral of Mrs Hillary—said I would call upon him, accompanied by his little son, about noon the next day, and also bring him tidings concerning Mrs Elliott.

I was as good as my word ; but not he. The woman of the house told me that he had left home about twelve o'clock, and did not say when he would return. He had gone to St ——'s church, as I afterwards learned from him. He watched the funeral procession into the church, and placed himself in a pew which commanded a near view of that occupied by the chief mourner, Mr Hillary ; who, however, never once raised his head from the hand-

kerchief in which his countenance was buried. When the body was borne to the grave, Elliott followed, and took his place beside the grave as near Mr Hillary as the attendants and the crowd would admit of. He several times formed the determination to interrupt the service by a solemn and public appeal to Hillary on the subject of his deserted daughter—but his tongue failed him, his feelings overpowered him ; and he staggered from where he stood to an adjoining tomb-stone, which he leaned against till the brief and solemn scene was concluded, and the mourners began to return. Once more, with desperate purpose, he approached the procession, and came up to Mr Hillary just as he was being assisted into the coach.

“ Look at me, sir,” said he, suddenly tapping Mr Hillary upon the shoulder. The old man seemed paralysed for a moment, and stared at him as if he did not know the strange intruder.

“ My name is Elliott, sir—your forsaken daughter is my heart-broken—starving wife ! do you relent, sir ? ”

“ Elliott !—Keep him away—keep him away for God’s sake ! ” exclaimed Mr Hillary, his face full of disgust and horror ; and the attendants violently dragged the intruder from the spot where he was standing, and kept him at a distance till the coach containing Mr Hillary had driven off. Elliott then returned home, which he reached about an hour after I had called. He paid me a visit in the evening, and I was glad to see him so much calmer than I had expected. He apologized with much earnestness for his breach of faith. He said he had found it impossible to resist the impulse which led him, in spite of all he had said overnight, to attend the funeral. —

he had persuaded himself of the more than possibility that his sudden and startling appearance at so solemn a moment might effect an alteration in Mr Hillary's feelings towards him. He gave me a full account of what had happened, and assured me with a melancholy air that he had now satisfied himself—that he had nothing to hope for further—nothing to disturb him—and he would attend to my injunctions and those of his surgical adviser at the Infirmary. He told me that he had seen Mrs Elliott about an hour before, and had left her in comparatively good spirits—but the people of the hospital had told him that her confinement was hourly expected.

"I wonder," said he, and sighed profoundly—"what effect her death would have upon Mr Hillary? Would he cast off her children—as he has cast her off? Would his hatred follow her into the grave? Now what should *you say, doctor?*"

The matter-of-fact, not to say indifferent air with which this very grave question was put, not a little surprised me. "Why, he must be obdurate indeed if such were to be the case,"—I answered. "I am in hopes, however, that in spite of all that has happened, he will ere long be brought to a sense of his guilt and cruelty in so long defying the dictates of conscience—the voice of nature.—When he finds himself *alone*"——

Elliott shook his head.

"It must be a thundering blow, doctor, that would make HIS iron heart feel—and—that blow"—he sighed—"may come much sooner, it may be"—— he shuddered, and looked at me with a wild air of apprehension.

"Let us hope for the best, however, Mr Elliott! Rely upon it, the present calmness of your inestimable

wife affords grounds for the happiest expectations concerning the approaching"—

"Ah! I hope you may not be mistaken! Her former accouchement was a long and dangerous one."

"Perhaps the very reason why her present may be an easy one!" He looked at me mournfully.

"And suppose it to be so—what a home has the poor creature to return to after her suffering! Is not *that* a dreary prospect?"

It was growing late, however, and presently taking an affectionate leave of his son, who had been sitting all the while on his knee overpowered with drowsiness, he left.

Mrs Elliott was taken ill on Sunday about midnight; and after a somewhat severe and protracted labour was delivered on Monday evening of a child that died a few minutes after its birth. Having directed the people at the hospital to summon me directly Mrs Elliott was taken ill, I was in attendance upon her within an hour after her illness had commenced. I sent a messenger on Monday morning to Mr Elliott, according to the promise I had given him immediately to send him the earliest information, with an entreaty that he would remain at home all day to be in readiness to receive a visit from me. He came down, however, to the hospital almost immediately after receiving my message; and walked to and fro before the institution, making anxious enquiries every ten minutes or quarter of an hour how his wife went on, and received ready and often encouraging answers. When I quitted her for the night, about an hour after delivery, leaving her much exhausted, but, as I too confidently supposed, out of danger, I earnestly entreated Mr Elliott, who continued before the gates of the hos-

pital in a state of the highest excitement, to return home—but in vain; and I left him with expressions of severe displeasure, assuring him that his conduct was absurd and useless—nay, criminally dangerous to himself. “What will become of your sight, Mr Elliott—pray think of *that*!—if you will persist in working yourself up to this dreadful pitch of nervous excitement? I do assure you that you are doing yourself every hour mischief which—which it may require months, if not years, to remedy; and is it kind to her you love—to those whom you ought to consult—whose interests are dependent upon yourself—thus to throw away the chances of recovery? Pray, Mr Elliott, listen, listen to reason, and return home!” He made me no reply, but wept, and I left, hoping that what I had said would soon produce the desired effect.

About four o'clock in the morning, I was awoken by a violent ringing of the bell and knocking at the door; and on hastily looking out of the bedroom window, beheld Mr Elliott.

“What is the matter there?” I enquired. “Is it you, Mr Elliott?”

“Oh doctor, doctor—for God's sake come!—My wife, my wife! She's dying! They have told me so! Come, doctor, oh, come!” Though I had been exceedingly fatigued with the labours of the preceding day, this startling summons soon dissipated my drowsiness, and in less than five minutes I was by his side. We ran almost all the way to the nearest coach-stand: and on reaching the hospital, found that there existed but too much ground for apprehension; for about two o'clock very alarming symptoms of profuse hæmorrhage made their appear-

ance; and when I reached her bed-side, a little after four o'clock, I saw, in common with the experienced resident accoucheur, who was also present, that her life was indeed trembling in the balance. While I sat watching, with feelings of melancholy interest and alarm, her snowy inanimate countenance, a tap on my shoulder from one of the female attendants attracted my eye to the door, where the chief matron of the establishment was standing. She beckoned me out of the room; and I noiselessly stepped out after her.

"The husband of this poor lady," said Mrs —, "is in a dreadful state, doctor, in the street. The porter has sent up word that he fears the gentleman is going mad, and will be attempting to break open the gates—that he insists upon being shown at once into his wife's room, or at least within the house! Pray oblige me, doctor, by going down and trying to pacify him! This will never do, you know—the other patients"—I hastened down stairs, and stepped quickly across the yard. My heart yearned towards the poor distracted being who stood outside the iron gates, with his arms stretched towards me through the bars.

"Oh say, is she alive! Is she alive?" he cried with a lamentable voice.

"She *is*, Mr Elliott—but really"——

"Oh, *is* she alive? Are you telling me truly? Is she indeed alive?"

"Yes, yes, Mr Elliott—but if you don't cease to make such a dreadful disturbance, your voice may reach her ear—and that would be instant death—indeed it would."

"I will! I will—but is she indeed alive? Don't deceive me!"

"This is the way he's been going on all night;" whispered the watchman, who had just stepped up.

"Mr Elliott, I tell you, truly, in the name of God, your wife is living—and I have not given up hope of her recovery."

"Oh, Mary! Mary! Mary! Oh come to me, my Mary! You said that you would return to me."

"Hadn't I better take him away, sir?" said the watchman. "The porter says he'll be wakening all the women in the hospital—shall I?"

"Let me stay—let me stay! I'll give you all I have in the world! I'll give you forty pounds—I will, I will,"—cried the unfortunate husband, clinging to the bars, and looking imploringly at me.

"Do not interfere—do not touch him, sir," said I to the watchman.

"Thank you! God bless you"—gasped the wretched sufferer, extending his hands towards mine, and wringing them convulsively; then turning to the watchman, he added, in a lower tone, the most piteous I ever heard—"Don't take me away! My wife is here; she's dying—I *can't* go away—but I'll not make any more noise!—Hush! hush! there is some one coming!"—A person approached from within the building, and whispering a few hurried words in my ear, retired. "Mr Elliott, shake hands with me," said I; "Mrs Elliott is reviving! I told you I had hope!—The accoucheur has this instant sent me word that he thinks the case is taking a favourable turn."—He sunk down suddenly on his knees in

silence; then grasped my hands through the bars, and shook them convulsively. In the fervour of his frantic feeling, he turned to the watchman, grasped his hands, and shook them.

“Hush! hush!”—he gasped—“Don’t speak? It will disturb her! A single sound may kill her—Ah”—— he looked with agonized apprehension at the mail-coach which that moment rattled rapidly and loudly by. At length he became so much calmer, that after pledging myself to return to him shortly, especially if any unfavourable change should take place, I withdrew, and repaired to the chamber where lay the poor unconscious creature—the subject of her husband’s wild and dreadful anxieties. I found that I had not been misinformed; and though Mrs Elliott lay in the most precarious situation possible—with no sign of life in her pallid countenance, and no pulse discernible at her wrist, we had reason for believing that a favourable change had taken place. After remaining in silence by her side for about a quarter of an hour, during which she seemed asleep, I took my departure, and conveyed the delightful intelligence to the poor sufferer without, that his hopes were justified by the situation in which I had left my sweet patient. I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me home, and restoring him to a little composure: but the instant that he had swallowed a hasty cup of coffee, without waiting even to see his little boy, who was being dressed to come down as usual to breakfast, he left the house and returned to the hospital, where I found him, as before, on driving up about twelve o’clock, but walking calmly to and fro before the gates. What anguish was written in his features! But a smile passed over them—

a joyful air, as he told me, before I could quit my carriage, that all was still going on well. It was so, I ascertained; and on returning from the hospital, I almost forced him into my carriage, and drove off to his lodgings, where I stayed till he had got into bed, and had solemnly promised me to remain there till I called in the evening.

For three days Mrs Elliott continued in the most critical circumstances; during which her husband was almost every other hour at the hospital, and at length so wearied every one with his anxious and incessant enquiries, that they would hardly give him civil answers any longer. Had I not twice bled him with my own hand, and myself administered to him soothing and lowering medicines, he would certainly, I think, have gone raving mad. On the fifth day Mrs Elliott was pronounced out of danger, but continued, of course, in a very exhausted state. Her first enquiries were about her husband, then her little Henry: and on receiving a satisfactory answer, a sweet sad smile stole over her features, and her feeble fingers gently compressed mine. Before I quitted her, she asked whether her husband might be permitted to see her—I of course answered in the negative. A tear stole down her cheek, but she did not attempt to utter a syllable.

The pressure of professional engagements did not admit of my seeing Mr Elliott more than once or twice during the next week. I frequently heard of him, however, at the hospital, where he called constantly three times a-day, but had not yet been permitted to see Mrs Elliott, who was considered, and in my opinion justly, unequal to the excitement of such an interview.

The dreadful mental agony in which he had spent the

last fortnight, was calculated to produce the most fatal effects upon his eyesight—of which, indeed, he seemed himself but too conscious, for every symptom of which he had complained was most fearfully aggravated. Nevertheless, I could not prevail upon him—at least, he said, for the present—to continue his visits to the Eye Infirmary. He said, with a melancholy air, that he had too many, and very different matters to attend to—and he must postpone, for the present, all attention to his own complaints. Alas ! he *had* many other subjects of anxiety than his own ailments ! Supposing his poor wife to be restored to him, even in a moderate degree of strength and convalescence—what prospect was before them ? What means remained of obtaining a livelihood ? What chance was there of her inexorable old father changing his fell purpose ? Was his wife then to quit the scene of her almost mortal sufferings, only to perish before his eyes—of want—and her father wallowing in wealth ?—the thought was horrible ! Elliott sat at home, alone, thinking of these things, and shuddered ; he quitted his home, and wandered through the streets with vacant eye and blighted heart.—*He wandereth abroad for bread, saying where is it ? He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.**

Friday.—This morning my wife called, at my suggestion, to see Mrs Elliott, accompanied by her little boy, whom I had perceived she was pining to see. I thought they might meet without affording ground for uneasiness as to the result.

* Job xv. 23.

"My little Harry!" exclaimed a low soft voice as my wife and child were silently ushered into the room where lay Mrs Elliott, wasted almost to a shadow, her face and hands—said my wife—white as the lily. "Come, love—kiss me!" she faintly murmured; and my wife brought the child to the bed-side, and lifting him upon her knee, inclined his face towards his mother. She feebly placed her arm around his neck, and pressed him to her bosom.

"Let me see his face!" she whispered, removing her arm.

She gazed tenderly at him for some minutes; the child looking first at her and then at my wife with mingled fear and surprise.

"*How like his father!*" she murmured—"kiss me again, love! Don't be afraid of your poor mother, Harry!" Her eyes filled with tears. "Am I so altered?" said she to my wife, who stammered Yes and No in one breath.

"Has he been a good boy?"

"Very—very"—replied my wife, turning aside her head, unable for a moment to look either mother or son in the face. Mrs Elliott perceived my wife's emotion, and her chill fingers gently grasped her hand.

"Does he say his prayers?—you've not forgotten *that*, Harry?"

The child, whose little breast was beginning to heave, shook his head, and lisped a faint—"No, mamma!"

"God bless thee, my darling!" exclaimed his mother, in a low tone, closing her eyes—"He will not desert thee—nor thy parents!—*He feeds the young ravens when they cry!*" She paused, and the tears trembled through

her almost transparent eyelids. My wife, who had with the utmost difficulty restrained her feelings, leaned over the poor sufferer, pressed her lips to her forehead, and gently taking the child with her, stepped hastily from the room. As soon as they had got into the matron's parlour, where my wife sat down for a few moments, her little companion burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break. The matron tried to pacify him, but in vain. "I hope, ma'am," said she to my wife, "he did not cry in this way before his mother? Dr —— and Mr —— both say that she must not be agitated in any way, or they will not answer for the consequences." At this moment I made my appearance, having called, in passing, to pay a visit to Mrs Elliott; but hearing how much her late interview had overcome her, I left, taking my wife and little Elliott—still sobbing—with me, and promising to look in, if possible, in the evening. I did do so, accordingly; and found her happily none the worse for the emotion occasioned by her first interview with her child, since her illness. She expressed herself very grateful to me for the care which she said we had evidently taken of him—"and how like he grows to his poor father!"—she added. "Oh! doctor, when may I see *him*? Do, dear doctor, let us meet, if it be but for a moment! Oh, how I long to see him! I will not be agitated! It will do me more good than all the medicine in this building!"

"In a few days time, my dear madam, I assure you"——

"Why not to-morrow?—oh, if you knew the good that one look of his would do me—he does not look ill?" she enquired suddenly.

"He—he looks certainly rather harassed on your account; but, in other respects, he is"——

"Promise me—let me see for myself; oh, bring him with you!—I—I—I own I could not bear to see him *alone*—but in *your* presence—do, dear doctor! promise!—I shall sleep so sweetly to-night if you will."

"Her looks—her tender murmuring voice, overcame me; and I promised to bring Mr Elliott with me some time on the morrow. I bade her good-night.

"Remember, doctor!" she whispered, as I rose to go.

"I will!"—said I, and quitted the room, already almost repenting of the rash promise I had made. But who could have resisted her?

Sweet soul! what was to become of thee? Bred up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to have every wish gratified, every want anticipated—what kind of scene awaited thee on returning to thy humble lodgings—

"Where hopeless Anguish pours her groan,
And lonely Want retires to die?"

For was it not so? What miracle was to save them from starvation? Full of such melancholy reflections, I walked home, resolving to leave no stone unturned in their behalf, and pledging myself and wife that the forty pounds we had already collected for the Elliots, from among our benevolent friends, should be raised to a hundred, however great might be the deficiency we made up ourselves!

Saturday.—I was preparing to pay some early visits to distant patients, and arranging so as to take Mr Elliott with me on my return, which I calculated would be about

two o'clock, to pay the promised visit to Mrs Elliott—when my servant brought me a handful of letters which had that moment been left by the twopenny postman. I was going to cram them all into my pocket, and read them in the carriage, when my eye was attracted by one of them much larger than the rest, sealed with a black seal, and the address in Mr Elliott's handwriting. I instantly resumed my seat; and placing the other letters in my pocket, proceeded to break the seal with some trepidation—which increased to a sickening degree when four letters fell out, all of them sealed with black, in Mr Elliott's handwriting, and addressed respectively to—"Jacob Hillary, Esq."—"Mrs Elliott,"—"Henry Elliott,"—and "Dr ——" (myself). I sat for a minute or two, with this terrible array before me, scarce daring to breathe, or to trust myself with my thoughts, when my wife entered, leading in her constant companion, little Elliott, to take their leave, as usual, before I set out for the day. The sight of "Henry Elliott," to whom one of these portentous letters was addressed, overpowered me. My wife, seeing me discomposed, was beginning to enquire the reason, when I rose, and with gentle force put her out of the room and bolted the door, hurriedly telling her that I had just received unpleasant accounts concerning one or two of my patients. With trembling hands I opened the letter which was addressed to me, and read with infinite consternation as follows:—

"When you are reading these few lines, kind doctor! I shall be sweetly sleeping the sleep of death. All will be over; and there will be one wretch the less upon the earth.

" God, before whom I shall be standing face to face, while you read this letter, will, I hope, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for appearing before Him uncalled for. Amen !

" But I could not live. I felt blindness—the last curse—descending upon me—blindness and beggary. I saw my wife broken-hearted. Nothing but misery and starvation before her and her child.

" Oh, has she not loved me with a noble love? And yet it is thus I leave her ! But she knows how through life I have returned her love, and she will hereafter find that love alone led me to take this dreadful step.

" Grievous has been the misery she has borne for my sake. I thought, in marrying her, that I might have overcome the difficulties which threatened us—that I might have struggled successfully at least for our bread; but He ordered otherwise, and *it has been in vain for me to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.*

" Why did I leave life? Because I know, as if a voice from Heaven had told me, that my death will reconcile my Mary and her father. It is me alone whom he hates, and her only on my account. When I shall be gone, he will receive her to his arms, and she and my son will be happy.

" Oh, my God ! that I shall never see her face again, or—— But presently she will look at our son, and she will revive.

" I entreat you, as in the name of the dead—it is a voice from the grave—to be yourself the bearer of this news to my suffering wife, when, and as you may think fit. Give her this letter, and also give, yourself, to Mr Hillary the letter which bears his dreadful name upon it.

I know, I feel, that it will open his heart, and he will receive them to his arms.

"I have written also a few lines to my son. Ah, my boy, your father will be mouldered into dust before you will understand what I have written. Grieve for your unfortunate father, but do not—disown him!

"As for you, best of men, my only *friend*, farewell! Forgive all the trouble I have given. God reward you! You will be in my latest thoughts. I have written to you last.

"Now I have done. I am calm; the bitterness of death is past. Farewell! The grave—the darkness of death is upon my soul—but I have no fear. To-night, before this candle shall have burnt out—at midnight——Oh, Mary! Henry!—Shall we ever meet again!

"H. E."

I read this letter over half-a-dozen times, for every paragraph pushed the preceding one out of my memory. Then I took up mechanically and opened the letter addressed to his son. It contained a large lock of his father's hair, and the following verses,* written in a large straggling hand:—

"*I have wished for death: wherefore do I not call for my son?*

"*My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.*

"*Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee,*

* From the Apocrypha. Tobit, ch. iv. 2, 3, 4.

when thou wast in her womb ; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave.

“ Thus, on the point of death, writes thy father to his beloved son. REMEMBER ! HENRY ELLIOTT.”

As soon as I had somewhat recovered the shock occasioned by the perusal of these letters, I folded them all up, stepped hastily into my carriage, and, postponing all my other visits, drove off direct to the lodgings of Mr Elliott. The woman of the house was standing at the door, talking earnestly with one or two persons.

“ Where is Mr Elliott ? ” I enquired, leaping out of the carriage.

“ That’s what we want to know, sir,” replied the woman, very pale. “ He must have gone out late last night, sir—and hasn’t been back since ; for when I looked into his room this morning to ask about breakfast, it was empty.”

“ Did you observe any thing particular in his appearance last night ? ” I enquired, preparing to ascend the little staircase.

“ Yes, sir, very wild-like ! And about eight or nine o’clock, he comes to the top of the stairs, and calls out, ‘ Mrs ——, did you hear that noise ? Didn’t you see something ? ’ ‘ Lord, sir,’ said I, in a taking, he spoke so sudden, ‘ no ! there wa’n’t no sight nor sound whatsoever ! ’—so he went into his room, and shut the door, and I never seed him since.”

I hastened to his room. A candlestick, its candle burnt down to the socket, stood on the little table at which he generally sat, together with a pen or two, an

inkstand, black wax, a sheet of paper, and a Bible open at the place from which he had copied the words addressed to his son. The room was apparently just as its unfortunate and frantic occupant had quitted it. I opened the table-drawer; it was full of paper which had been covered with writing, and was now torn into small fragments. One half sheet was left, full of strange incoherent expressions, apparently forming part of a prayer, and evincing, alas! how fearfully the writer's reason was disturbed! But where was poor Elliott? What mode of death had he selected?

At first I thought of instantly advertising and describing his person, and issuing hand-bills about the neighbourhood; but ultimately determined to wait till the Monday's newspapers made their appearance—some one of which might contain intelligence concerning him which might direct my movements. And, in the meantime, how was I to appear before Mrs Elliott, and account for my not bringing her husband?—I determined to send her a written excuse, on the score of pressing and unexpected engagements, but promising to call upon her either on Sunday or Monday. I resolved to do nothing rashly; for it glanced across my mind, as *possible*, that Elliott had not really carried into execution the dreadful intentions expressed in his letter to me, but had resorted to a stratagem only in order to terrify Mr Hillary into a reconciliation. This notion took such full possession of my heated imagination, that I at length lost sight of all the glaring improbabilities attending it. Alas, however, almost the first paragraph that fell under my hurried eye, in scanning over the papers of Monday, was the following:—

“ On Saturday, about eight o'clock in the morning, some labourers discovered the body of a man of respectable appearance, apparently about thirty years old, floating, without a hat, in the New River. It was immediately taken out of the water, but life seemed to have been for some hours extinct. One or two letters were found upon his person, but the MS. too much spread and blotted with the water to afford any clue to the identity of the unfortunate person. The body lies at the Red Boar public-house, where a coroner's inquest is summoned for to-day at twelve o'clock.”

I drove off to the place mentioned in the paragraph, and arrived there just as the jury was assembling. There was a considerable crowd about the doors. I sent in my card; and stating that I believed I could identify the body for which the inquest was summoned, I was allowed to view the corpse, and ushered at once into the room where it lay.

I wish Mr Hillary could have entered that room with me, and have stood beside me, as I stepped shudderingly forward, and perceived that I was looking upon—HIS VICTIM! The body lay with its wet clothes undisturbed, just as it had been taken out of the water. The damp hair—the eyes wide open—the hands clenched, as if with the agonies of death——

Here lay the husband of Mrs Elliott—the fond object of her unconquerable love! This was he to whom she had written so tenderly on quitting him! Here lay he whom she had so sweetly consoled by almost daily messages through me! This was he to whom, with a pious confidence, she had predicted her speedy and happy return! This was the father of the sweet boy who sat

prattling at my table only that morning ! This—wretch ! monster ! fiend ! this is the body of him you flung, on an infamous charge, into the dungeons of Newgate ! This is the figure of him that shall **HEREAFTER**——

I could bear it no longer, and rushed from the room in an agony ! After drinking a glass of water, I recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make my appearance in the jury-room ; where I deposed to such facts—carefully concealing only, for Mrs Elliott and her son's sake, the causes which led to the commission of the fatal act—as satisfied the jury that the deceased had destroyed himself while in a state of mental derangement ; and they returned their verdict accordingly.

After directing the immediate removal of the body to the house where Mr Elliott had lodged—the scene of so many agonies—of such intense and undeserved misery—I drove off ; and, though quite unequal to the task, hurried through my round of patients, anxious to be at leisure in the evening for the performance of the solemn—the terrible duty—imposed upon me by poor Elliott—the conveying his letter to Mr Hillary, and communicating at the same time, with all the energy in my power, the awful results of his cruel, his tyrannical, his unnatural conduct. How I prayed that God would give me power to shake that old man's guilty soul !

Our dinner was sent away that day almost untouched. My wife and I interchanged but few and melancholy words ; our noisy, lively little guest was not present to disturb, by his innocent sallies, the mournful silence ; for, unable to bear his presence, I had directed that he should not be brought down that day. I had written to Mrs Elliott a brief and hasty line, saying—that I had

just seen Mr Elliott! but that it would be impossible for either of us to call upon her that day! adding, that I would certainly call upon her the day after—and—Heaven pardon the equivocation!—bring Mr Elliott, *if possible*, which I feared might be doubtful, as his eyes were under very active treatment.—

I have had to encounter in my time many, very many trying and terrible scenes; but I never approached any with so much apprehension and anxiety as the one now cast upon me. Fortifying myself with a few glasses of wine, I put poor Elliott's letter to Mr Hillary in my pocket-book, and drove off for — Square. I reached the house about eight o'clock. My servant, by my direction, thundered impetuously at the door—a startling summons I intended it to be! The porter drew open the door almost before my servant had removed his hand from the knocker.

"Is Mr Hillary at home?" I enquired, stepping hurriedly from my carriage, with the fearful letter in my hand. "He is, sir," said the man, with a flurried air—"But—he—he—does not receive company, sir, since my mistress's death."

"Take my card to him, sir. My name is Dr —. I must see Mr Hillary instantly."

I waited in the hall for a few moments, and then received a message, requesting me to walk into the back drawing-room. There I saw Miss Gubbley, alone, and dressed in deep mourning. What I had heard of this woman inspired me with the utmost contempt and hatred for her. What a countenance! Meanness, malice, cunning, and sycophancy seemed struggling for the ascendant in its expression.

"Pardon me, madam—my business," said I, peremptorily, "is not with you, but with Mr Hillary. Him I must see, and immediately."

"Dr ——, what *is* the matter?" she enquired, with mingled anger and anxiety in her countenance.

"I have a communication, madam, for Mr Hillary's private ear—I *must* see him; I insist upon seeing him immediately."

"This is strange conduct, sir—really," said Miss Gubbley, in an impudent manner, but her features becoming every moment paler and paler. "Have you not already?"——

I unceremoniously pushed the malignant little parasite aside, opened the folding doors, and stepped instantly into the presence of the man I at once desired and dreaded to see. He sat on the sofa, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"Dr ——!" he exclaimed, with an astonished and angry air—"Your servant, doctor! What's the meaning of all this?"

"I am sorry to intrude upon you, Mr Hillary—especially after the unpleasant manner in which our acquaintance was terminated—but—I have a dreadful duty to perform"—pointing to the letter I held, and turning towards him its black seal. He saw it. He seemed rather startled or alarmed; motioned me, with a quick anxious bow, to take a seat, and resumed his own. "Excuse me, Mr Hillary—but we must be *alone*," said I, pointing to Miss Gubbley, who had followed me with a suspicious and insolent air, exclaiming, as she stepped hastily towards Mr Hillary—"Don't suffer this conduct, sir! It's very incorrect—very, sir."

"We *must* be alone, sir," I repeated, calmly and peremptorily, "or I shall retire at once. You would never cease to repent *that*, sir:" and Mr Hillary, as if he had suddenly discovered some strange meaning in my eye, motioned the pertinacious intruder to the door, and she reluctantly obeyed. I drew my chair near Mr Hillary, who seemed, by this time, thoroughly alarmed.

"Will you read this letter, sir?" said I, handing it to him. He took it into his hand; looked first at the direction; then at the seal, and lastly at me, in silence.

"Do you know that handwriting, sir?" I enquired.

He stammered an answer in the negative.

"Look at it, sir, again. You ought to know it—you *must* know it well." He laid down the letter; fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket for his glasses; placed them with infinite trepidation upon his forehead, and again took the letter into his hands, which shook violently; and his sight was so confused with agitation, that I saw he could make nothing of it.

"It seems—it appears to be—a man's hand, sir. Whose is it? What is it about? What's the matter?" he exclaimed, looking at me over his glasses with a frightened stare.

"I have attended, sir, a coroner's inquest this morning"—The letter dropped instantly from Mr Hillary's shaking hand upon the floor; his lips slowly opened.

"The writer of that letter, sir, was found drowned on Saturday last," I continued slowly, looking steadfastly at him, and feeling myself grow paler every moment—"This day I saw the body—stretched upon a shutter at an inn. Oh, those awful eyes! That hair, matted and

muddy ! Those clenched hands—Horror filled my soul as I looked at all this, and thought of YOU !”

His lips moved, he uttered a few unintelligible sounds, and his face, suddenly bedewed with perspiration, assumed one of the most ghastly expressions that a human countenance could exhibit. I remained silent, nor did he speak ; but the big drops rolled from his forehead and fell upon the floor. In the pier-glass opposite, to which my eye was attracted by seeing some moving figure reflected in it, I beheld the figure of Miss Gubbley ; who having been no doubt listening at the door, could no longer subdue her terrified curiosity, and stole into the room on tip-toe, and stood terror-stricken behind my chair. Her presence seemed to restore Mr Hillary to consciousness.

“ Take her away—go away—go—go ”—he murmured, and I led her, unresisting, from the room, and, to be secured from her further intrusion, bolted both the doors.

“ You had better read the letter, sir,” said I, with a deep sigh, resuming my seat ; his eyes remained riveted on me.

“ I—I—I—*cannot*, sir ! ” he stammered. A long pause ensued. “ If—she—had but called ”——he gasped, “ but once—or sent—after her—her mother’s death ”——and with a long groan he leaned forward, and almost fell against me.

“ She did call, sir. She came the day after her mother’s death,” said I, shaking my head sorrowfully.

“ No, she didn’t,” he replied, suddenly looking at me with a stupified air.

“ Then her visit was cruelly *concealed* from you, sir. Poor creature, I know she called.”

He rose slowly from the prostrate posture in which he had remained for the last few moments, clenched his trembling fists, and shook them with impotent anger.

"Who—who," he muttered,—“who dared—I—I—I'll ring the bell. I'll have all the”——

"Would you have really received her, then, sir, if you had known of her calling?"

His lips moved, he attempted in vain to utter an answer, and sobbed violently, covering his face with his hands.

"Come, Mr Hillary, I see," said I, in a somewhat milder manner, "that the feelings of a FATHER are not yet utterly extinguished"—he burst into vehement weeping—"and I hope that—that—you may live to repent what you have done; to redress the wrongs you have committed! Your poor persecuted daughter, Mr Hillary, is not dead." He uttered a sudden sharp cry that alarmed me; grasped my hands, and carrying them to his lips, kissed them in a kind of ecstasy.

"Tell me—say plainly—only say—that Mary is alive"——

"Well, then, sir, your daughter is alive, but"——

He fell upon his knees, and groaned "Oh God, I thank thee! I thank thee! How I thank thee!"

I waited till he had in some measure recovered from the ecstasy of emotion into which my words had thrown him, and assisted in loosening his shirt-collar and neck-handkerchief, which seemed to oppress him.

"Who—then"—he stammered—"who was—*found drowned*—the coroner's inquest"——

"Her poor broken-hearted husband, sir, who will be buried at my expense in a day or two."

He covered his face again with his hands, and cried bitterly.

"This letter was written by him to you, sir; and he sent it to me only a few hours, it seems, before he destroyed himself, and commissioned me to deliver it to you. Is not his blood, sir, lying at your door?"

"Oh Lord, have mercy on me! Lord—Christ—forgive me! Lord, forgive a guilty old sinner," he groaned, sinking again on his knees, and wringing his hands. "I—I AM his murderer! I feel—I know it!"

"Shall I read to you, sir, his last words?" said I.

"Yes, but—they'll choke me. I can't bear them." He sunk back exhausted upon the sofa. I took up the letter, which had remained till then upon the floor since he had dropped it from his palsied grasp, and opening it, read with faltering accents the following:—

"For your poor dear daughter's sake, sir,—who is now a widow and a beggar, abandon your fierce and cruel resentment. I know that I am the guilty cause of all her misery. I have suffered, and paid the full penalty of my sin! And I am, when you read this, amongst the dead.

"Forgive me, father of my beloved and suffering wife! Forgive me, as I forgive you, in this solemn moment, from my heart, whatever wrongs you may have done me!

"Let my death knock loudly at your heart's door, so that it may open and take in my suffering—perishing Mary—YOUR Mary, and our unoffending little one! I know it will! Heaven tells me that my sacrifice is accepted! I die full of grief, but contented in the belief

that all will be well with the dear ones I leave behind me. God incline your heart to mercy! Farewell! So prays your unhappy—guilty son-in-law,—HENRY ELLIOTT."

It was a long while before my emotion, almost blinding my eyes and choking my utterance, permitted me to conclude this melancholy letter. Mr Hillary sat all the while aghast.

"The gallows is too good for me!" he gasped; "oh, what a monster! what a wretch have I been! Ay, I'll surrender! I know I'm guilty! It's all my doing! I confess all! It was I—it was I put him in prison."—I looked darkly at him as he uttered these last words, and shook my head in silence.

"Ah! I see—I see you know it all! Come, then! Take me away! Away with me to Newgate. Any where you like. I'll plead guilty!" He attempted to rise, but sank back again into his seat.

"But—*where's Mary?*" he gasped.

"Alas," I replied, "she does not yet know that she is a widow! that her child is an orphan! She has herself, poor meek soul, been lying for many days at the gates of death, and even yet, her fate is more than doubtful!"

"Where is she? Oh Lord, Lord! Let me know—tell me, or I shall die. Let me know where I may go and drop down at her feet, and ask her forgiveness!"

"She is in a common hospital, a lying-in hospital, sir, where she, a few days ago only, gave birth to a dead child, after enduring, for the whole time of her pregnancy, the greatest want and misery! She has worked her poor

fingers to the bones, Mr Hillary—she has slaved like a common servant for her child, her husband, and herself, and yet she has hardly found bread for them!”

“Oh! stay, stay, doctor. A common hospital! My daughter—a common hospital!” repeated Mr Hillary, pressing his hand to his forehead, and staring vacantly at me.

“Yes, sir—a common hospital!—Where else could she go to? God be thanked, sir, for finding such resources, such places of refuge, for the poor and forsaken! She fled thither to escape starvation, and to avoid eating the bread scarce sufficient for her husband and her child! I have seen her enduring such misery as would have softened the heart of a fiend!—And, good God! how am I to tell her what has happened? How I shudder at the task her dead husband has imposed upon me!—

What am I to say to her? Tell me, Mr Hillary, for I am confounded—I am in despair! How shall I break to her this frightful event?”—Mr Hillary groaned—“Pray, tell me, sir,” I continued, with real sternness, “what am I to do? How am I to face your wretched daughter in the morning! She has been unable even to see her husband for a moment since her illness. How will she bear being told that she is NEVER to see him again? I shall be almost guilty of her murder!” I paused, greatly agitated.

“Tell her—tell her—conceal the death,” he gasped; “and tell her first, that all’s forgiven, if she’ll accept my forgiveness, and forgive *me*! Tell her—be sure to tell her—that my whole fortune is hers and her child’s.—Surely *that*—I will make my will afresh. Every half-

penny shall go to her and her child. It shall, so help me God!"

"Poor creature!" I exclaimed, bitterly, "can money heal thy broken heart?" I paused. "You may relent, Mr Hillary, and receive your unhappy daughter into your house again, but, believe me, her heart will lie in her husband's grave!"

"Doctor, doctor! You are killing me!" he exclaimed, every feature writhing under the scourgings of remorse.

"Tell me! only tell me what can I do more? This house—all I have, is hers, for the rest of her life. She may turn me into the streets. I'll live on bread and water, they shall roll in gold. But, oh, where is she! where is she? I'll send the carriage instantly." He rose, as if intending to ring the bell.

"No, no, Mr Hillary; she must not be disturbed! She must remain at her present abode, under the roof of charity, where she lies, sweet being! humble and grateful among her sisters in suffering!"

"I—I'll give a thousand pounds to the charity—I will. I'll give a couple of thousands—so help me God, I will. And I'll give it in the name of a Repentant Old Sinner. Oh, I'll do every thing that a guilty wretch can do. But I *must* see my daughter! I must hear her blessed innocent lips say that she forgives me!"—

"Pause, sir," said I solemnly—"you know not that she will live to leave the hospital, or receive your penitent acknowledgments—that she will not die while I am telling her the horrid!"—

"What! has she yet to hear of it!" he exclaimed, looking aghast.

"I told you so, sir, some time ago."

"Oh, yes, you did—you did—but I forgot. Lord, Lord, I feel going mad!" He rose feebly from the sofa, and staggered for a moment to and fro, but his knees refused their support, and he sunk down again upon his seat, where he sat staring at me with a dull glassy eye, while I proceeded—

"Another melancholy duty remains to be performed. I think, sir, you should see his remains."

"I—*see the body!*" Fright flitted over his face. "Do you wish me to drop down dead beside it, sir? I see the body? It would burst out a-bleeding directly I got into the room—for I murdered him! — Oh, God, forgive me! Oh, spare me such a sight!"

"Well, sir, since your alarm is so great, that sad sight may be spared; but there is *one* thing you must do"—I paused; he looked at me apprehensively—"testify your repentance, sir, by following his poor remains to the grave."

"I—I could not! It's no use frightening me thus, doctor!—I—I tell you I should die—I should never return home alive! But, if you'll allow it, my carriage shall follow. I'll give orders this very night for a proper, a grand funeral, such as is fit for—*my—my—son-in-law!* He shall be buried in my vault. No, no, that cannot be, for then"—he shuddered—"I must lie beside him! But I cannot go to the funeral! Lord, Lord, how the crowd would stare at me! how they would hoot me! They would tear me out of the coach. No"—he trembled—"spare me that also! kind sir, spare me attending the funeral! I'll remain at home in my own room in the dark all that day upon my knees, but I cannot, nay, I

will not follow him to the grave. The tolling of that bell"—his voice died away—"would kill me."

"There is yet another thing, sir. His little boy"—my voice faltered—"is living at my house ; perhaps you would refuse to see him, for he is very like his wretched father."

"Oh bring him ! bring him to me !" he murmured. "How I will worship him ! what I will do for him ! But how his murdered father will always look out of his eyes at me ! Oh my God ! whither shall I go, what must I do to escape ? Oh that I had died and been buried with my poor wife, the other day, before I had heard of all this !"

"You would have known—you would have heard of it *hereafter*, sir."

"Ah ! that's it ! I know it—I know what you mean, and I feel it's true !—Yes, I shall be *darned* for what I've done !—Such a wretch—how can I expect forgiveness ? Oh, will you read a prayer with me ? No, I'll pray myself—no, I dare not—cannot"—

"Pray, sir ; and may your prayers be heard ! And also pray that I may be able to tell safely my awful message to your daughter—that the blow may not smite her into the grave ! And lastly, sir," I added, rising, and addressing him with all the emphasis and solemnity I could, "I charge you, in the name of God, to make no attempt to see your daughter, or send to her, till you see or hear from me again."

He promised to obey my injunctions, imploring me to call upon her the next day, and grasping my hand between his own with a convulsive energy, so that I could not extricate it but with some little force. As I had

never once offered a syllable of sympathy throughout our interview, so I quitted his presence coldly and sternly, while he threw himself down at full length upon the sofa, and I heard without any emotion his half-choked exclamation, "Lord, Lord, what is to become of me!"

On reaching the back drawing-room, I encountered Miss Gubbley walking to and fro, excessively pale and agitated. I had uncoiled that little viper—I had plucked it from the heart into which it had crept—and so far I felt that I had not failed in that night's errand! I foresaw her speedy dismissal; and it took place within a day or two of that on which I had visited Mr Hillary.

The next day, about noon, I called at the lodgings where Elliott's remains were lying, in order that I might make a few simple arrangements for a speedy funeral.

"Oh—here's Dr ——!" exclaimed the woman of the house, to a gentleman dressed in black, who, with two others in similar habiliments, was just quitting. "These here gentlemen, sir, are come about the funeral, sir, of poor Mr Elliott."—I begged them to return into the house. "I presume, sir," said I, "you have been sent here by Mr Hillary's orders?"

"A—Mr Hillary did me the honour, sir, to request me to call, sir," replied the polite man of death with a low bow—"and am favoured with the expression of his wishes, sir, to spare no expense in showing his respect for the deceased. So my men have just measured the body, sir; the shell will be here to-night, sir, the leaden coffin the day after, and the outer coffins"—

"Stop, sir—Mr Hillary is premature. He has quite mistaken my wishes, sir. I act as the executor of Mr

Elliott, and Mr Hillary has no concern whatever with the burial of these remains."

He bowed with an air of mingled astonishment and mortification.

"It is my wish, and intention, sir," said I, "that this unfortunate gentleman might be buried in the simplest and most private manner possible"——

"Oh, sir! but Mr Hillary's orders to me were—pardon me, sir, so *very* liberal, to do the thing in a gentleman-like way"——

"I tell you again, sir, that Mr Hillary has nothing whatever to do with the matter, nor shall I admit of his interference. If you choose to obey *my* orders,—you will procure a plain deal coffin, a hearse and pair, and one mourning coach, and provide a grave in —— churchyard—nay, open Mr Hillary's vault and bury there, if he will permit it,—I care not."

"I really think, sir, you'd better employ a person in the small line," said he, casting a grim look at his two attendants—"I'm not accustomed"——

"You may retire then, sir, at once," said I; and with a lofty bow the great undertaker withdrew. No!—despised, persecuted, and forsaken had poor Elliott been in his life; there should be, I resolved, no splendid mockery—no fashionable foolery about his burial! I chose for him not the vault of Mr Hillary, but a grave in the humble churchyard of ——, where the poor suicide might slumber in "penitential loneliness!"

He was buried as I wished—no one attending the funeral but myself, the proprietor of the house in which he had lived at the period of his death, and one of his

early and humble acquaintance, who had been present at his marriage. I had wished to carry with us as chief mourner, little Elliott—by way of fulfilling, as far as possible, the touching injunctions left by his father—but my wife dissuaded me from it. “Well, poor Elliott,” said I, as I took my last look into his grave—

‘After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well!’

Heaven forgive the rash act which brought his days to an untimely close, and him whose cruelty and wickedness occasioned it!”

I shall not bring the reader again into the guilty and gloomy presence of Mr Hillary. His hard heart was indeed broken by the blow that poor Elliott had so recklessly struck, and whose mournful prophecy was in this respect fulfilled. Providence decreed that the declining days of the inexorable and unnatural parent should be clouded with a wretchedness that admitted of neither intermission nor alleviation, equally destitute as he was of consolation from the past, and hope from the future!

And his daughter! Oh, disturb not the veil that has fallen over the broken-hearted!

Never again did the high and noble spirit of Mary Elliott lift itself up; for her heart lay buried in her young husband’s grave,—the grave dug for him by the eager and cruel hands of her father. In vain did those hands thenceforth lavishly scatter about her all the splendours and luxuries of unbounded wealth; they could never divert her cold undazzled eye from the mournful image of him whose death had purchased them; and what could she see ever beside her, in her too late repentant father, but his murderer!

THE LAST CHAPTER.

THE DESTROYER.

Faithful and innocent readers! how many, many thousands of you will read this narrative with beating and indignant hearts! Shrink not from its sad—its faithful details; consider them, if it be not presumptuously spoken, in somewhat of that spirit in which you ponder the mournful history of Eve and Eden—of her, our first mother, who, weakly listening to the serpent tempter, was ignominiously thrust out of her bright abode, degraded from her blessed estate, and entailed innumerable ills upon her hapless progeny!

With kindly and fervent feeling, my conscience bearing testimony to the purity of my intentions, have I drawn up, and now thus commend to you,—to readers indeed of both sexes, and of all classes of society, but those especially who move amidst the scenes from which its incidents have been taken,—this narrative, the last *Passage from the Diary of a late Physician*; of him who, having been long acquainted with you, now bids you farewell; and could his eye detect among you one whose trembling foot was uplifted to deviate from the

path of honour and of virtue, he would whisper, amidst his reluctant adieus—BEWARE!

Mrs St Helen, a young, a fond, and beautiful mother, having, one morning in June 18—, observed a faint flush on the forehead of her infant son,—her first-born and only child, and ascertained from the nursery-maid that he had been rather restless during the night, persuaded herself and her husband that matters were serious enough to require immediate medical assistance from London. The worthy Colonel, therefore, ordered his phaeton to be at the door by ten o'clock; and, having been scarcely allowed by his anxious wife to swallow a cup of coffee and finish his egg, presently jumped into his vehicle and dashed off almost as rapidly as Mrs St Helen, who remained standing on the steps, could have wished. Though the distance was nearly nine miles, he reached my house by a little after eleven, and was at once shown into my room, where I was arranging my list of daily visits. It seemed clear, from this hurried statement, that his little son and heir was about to encounter the perils of scarlet fever or measles, at the very least; and such were his importunities, that though I had several special engagements for the early part of the day, I was induced, at his suggestion, to put two hacks to my carriage, and drive down to Densleigh Grange, accompanied by the Colonel, who ordered his servant to remain in town till the horses had been rested.

This was the first time that my professional services had been required in Colonel St Helen's family—in fact, I had never been at Densleigh, though, previous marriage, I had been rather intimately acquainted

Mrs St Helen. We had never once met even since the day of her marriage, three years ago. When I last saw her—upon that happy occasion—I thought her certainly one of the loveliest young women the eye could look upon. I really believe that her person and manners were the most fascinating I ever witnessed. When I first saw her she was only seventeen, and dressed in the deepest mourning; for her father, the Honourable Mr Annesley, a beneficed clergyman in the West of England, had recently died, leaving her to the care of his brother the Earl of Hetheringham, whose family I was then attending. Her mother had died about a year after giving birth to this her first and only child; and her father left nothing behind him but his daughter—and his debts. The former he bequeathed, as I have already intimated, to his brother, who accepted the charge with a very ungracious air. He was a cold, proud man—qualities, however, in which his Countess excelled him—by no means rich, except in children; of whom he had three sons and five daughters, who instantly recognised in their beautiful cousin a most formidable competitor for the notice of society. And they were right. The form of her features was worthy of the rich commingled expression of sweetness, spirit, and intellect that beamed from them. What passion shone out of her dark blue eyes! Her figure, too, was well-proportioned and graceful, just budding out into womanhood. She was sitting, when I first saw her, at a little rose-wood table, near the Countess, in her boudoir—one hand hung down with a pen in it, while the other supported her forehead, from which her fingers were pressing aside her auburn hair—evidently in a musing mood, which my sudden

entrance through the door already standing wide open, put an end to. "You need not go," said the Countess, coldly, seeing her hastily preparing to shut up her little desk—"my niece—Miss Annesley, Doctor!" I knew the Countess—her character and circumstances well; this exquisite girl, her niece, and she with five daughters to dispose of!—Miss Annesley, after slightly acknowledging my salutation, resumed her seat and pen. I could hardly keep my eyes away from her. If she looks so lovely now, in spite of this gloomy dress, thought I, what must she be when she resumes the garb of youthful gaiety and elegance! Ah, Countess, you may well tremble for your daughters, if this girl is to appear among them. "You see, Doctor," continued the Countess, in a matter-of-fact manner, while these thoughts glanced across my mind—"we are all thrown into sables through the death of the Earl's brother, Mr Annesley."

"Indeed!" I interrupted, with a look of sympathy towards her niece, who spread her hand over her eyes, while the pen that was in the other slightly quivered. "This young lady is, in fact, all my poor brother-in-law left behind him; and" (adding in a lower tone) "she now forms one of our *little* family!" I felt infinitely hurt at the scarce-concealed sneer with which she uttered the word "little." Poor Miss Annesley, I feared, had perceived it; for, after evidently struggling ineffectually to conceal her emotions, she rose and stepped abruptly towards the door.

"You'll find your cousins in the drawing-room, love! go and sit with them," said the Countess, endeavouring to speak affectionately. "Poor thing!" she cried, as soon as Miss Annesley had closed the

which I fancied I heard her run rapidly up stairs—doubtless to weep alone in her own room—"her father hasn't been dead more than a fortnight, and she feels it acutely!—shockingly involved, my dear Doctor—over head and ears in debt! You've no idea how it annoys the Earl! My niece is perfectly penniless! Literally, we were obliged to provide the poor thing with mournings! I insisted on the Earl's making her one of our family;"—a great falsehood, as I subsequently discovered, for she had suggested and urged sending her abroad to a nunnery, which, however inclined to do, he dared not for appearances' sake. "She'll be a companion for my younger daughters, though she's quite countrified at present—don't you think so?"

"Pardon me, my dear Countess—she struck me as extremely elegant and beautiful," I answered, with sufficient want of tact.

"Rather pretty, certainly—she's only seventeen, poor thing," drawled the Countess, immediately changing the subject.

I could not help feeling much interest in the poor girl, thrust thus, in the first agonies of her grievous bereavement, into a soil and atmosphere ungenial and even noxious—into a family that at once disliked and dreaded her. What a life seemed before her! But, I reflected, the conflict may be painful, it cannot be long. Lady Hetheringham cannot utterly exclude her niece from society; and *there*, once seen, she must triumph. And so, indeed, it happened; for in less than six months after the period of her arrival at her uncle's, she began to go out freely into society with his family; it having been considered by her prudent and affectionate relatives, that

the sooner this young creature could be got off their hands the better. The Earl and Countess, indeed, began to feel some apprehension now and then lest one of their niece's *male* cousins—the eldest possibly, might feel rather more attachment towards her than mere relationship required. She was directed, therefore, to apply herself diligently to the completion of her education, in which she had already made rapid progress; which, together with her natural talents, soon rendered her independent of the fashionable instructors who taught her cousins. Miss Annesley was, in truth, a creature of much enthusiasm of character; of a generous and confiding nature, a sanguine temperament—fond withal of admiration, as who is not, of either sex? She felt in her element in the glittering society in which she now incessantly appeared, or rather into which she was forced. She breathed freely, for glorious was the contrast it afforded to the chilling, withering restraint and coldness that ever awaited her at her uncle's. *There* she but too sorrowfully felt herself an intruder—that her aunt and uncle were stirring heaven and earth to get rid of her. Many a bitter hour did she pass alone when she reflected upon this, and saw no course open to her but to second the exertions of her heartless relatives, and be emancipated from her bitter thralldom by almost any one who chose to make the attempt. Her anxieties on this score laid her open to the imputation of being little more than a brilliant flirt or coquette—than which certainly nothing could be more distant from the wishes, or repugnant to the feelings, of poor Miss Annesley. She saw that her uncle and aunt would have encouraged the advances of any one that seemed likely to prop— for a

beautiful but penniless orphan, and was almost disposed to gratify them. What sort of life would not be preferable to that of her present bitter dependence? Alas, how generous, how noble a heart was thus trifled with—was thus endangered, if not even directly betrayed, by those whose sacred duty it was, whose pride and delight it should have been, to guard and cherish it! However pure, however high-minded, a girl of Miss Annesley's youth and inexperience, of her eager and fervent temper and character, could not but be exposed to imminent danger when thrust thus into such scenes as are afforded by the fashionable society of the metropolis. Poor Emma! No eye of zealous and vigilant affection followed thee when wandering through these dazzling mazes of dissipation and of danger!—Anxious, however, as were Lord and Lady Hetheringham to get rid of their lovely charge, their efforts were unsuccessful. Two seasons passed over, and their niece, though the admired of all beholders, utterly eclipsing her impatient and envious cousins, seemed unlikely to form an alliance; whether owing to the incessant and widely-propagated sneers and injurious falsehoods of her five rivals, the ill-disguised coldness and dislike of the Earl and Countess, or, above all, her want of fortune. Many who admired her, and felt disposed to pay her decisive attentions, were deterred by the fear that a young woman, of her family, station, beauty, and accomplishments, was an object placed far beyond their reach; while others sighed—

“Sighed and looked, sighed and looked, and sighed again;”

and feared that if she brought her husband no fortune, she nevertheless was perfectly able and disposed to spend

his. Conquests, in the ordinary phrase, she made innumerable, and was several times mentioned in the newspapers as "likely to be led to the hymeneal altar" by Lord —, Sir —, the Honourable Mr —, and so forth. As far, indeed, as appearances went, there was some ground for each of these rumours. Miss Annesley had many followers, most of whom were, however, satisfied by having their names associated in fashionable rumour with that of so distinguished a beauty. The only one of all these triflers who ever established any thing like an interest in her heart was the elegant and well-known Alverley; a man whose fascinating appearance and manners soon distanced the pretensions of all those who aimed at an object he had selected. Alverley was, when he chose, irresistible. He could inspire the woman he sought with a conviction that he loved her passionately; throwing a fervour and devotion into his manner which few, very few women, and no young inexperienced woman, could resist. Poor Miss Annesley fancied that this envied prize was hers; that he was destined to be led a "graceful captive at her chariot-wheels;" that he was the gallant knight who was to deliver her from her bondage. Here, too, however, she was destined to meet with disappointment; the distinguished Alverley disappeared from among the throng of her admirers quite suddenly; the fact being, that in a confidential conversation with one of her cousins, in a quadrille, he had become satisfied that it was undesirable for him to prosecute any farther his disinterested attentions in *that* quarter. Miss Annesley felt his defection more keenly than that of any other of her transient admirers. Her eager feelings, her inexperienced heart, would not permit her to see how

utterly unworthy was one who could act thus, of even a moment's regret. Alas ! her high spirit had not even fair play ! His graceful person, his handsome and expressive features, his fascinating manners, could not so easily be banished from her young heart ; and her grief and mortification were but little assuaged, however perhaps her wounded *pride* might be soothed, by the intimation Alverley contrived to have conveyed to her, from several quarters, that her regrets fell infinitely short of the poignancy of his own, in being compelled by others, on whom his all depended, to abandon the dearest hopes he had ever cherished.

Thus it was that Miss Annesley and her heartless and selfish relatives beheld two seasons pass away without any prospect of their being permanently released from one another's presence and society ; and an infinite gratification did the poor girl experience in being invited to spend the autumn of 18— with a distant relative of Lady Hetheringham's, in a remote part of England. This lady was the widow of a General officer, and during her stay in town that season had formed an attachment towards Miss Annesley, whose painful position in the Earl's family she soon perceived and compassionated ; therefore it was that her invitation had been given, and she felt delighted at securing the society of her young and brilliant guest during the tedious autumn and winter months.

Miss Annesley proved herself to be possessed of a warm and affectionate heart in addition to beauty and accomplishments, and every day increased the attachment between her and her excellent hostess. These six months were the happiest Miss Annesley had ever known. Before

returning to town, an event she dreaded, a very eligible offer of marriage was made to her by a relative of her hostess, who happened to be quartered with his regiment in her immediate neighbourhood, Major St Helen. He was an amiable, high-spirited man, of excellent family, in easy circumstances, and with considerable expectations. His features, though not handsome, were manly and expressive; his figure was tall and commanding, his manners frank and simple, his disposition affectionate; his suit was supported by Miss Annesley's kind hostess, and before her return to town he gained the promise of her hand. The more, indeed, she knew of him, and learnt of his character, the more confidently she committed herself to him; she became sincerely and affectionately attached to him who loved her so evidently with fervour and enthusiasm. In about a twelvemonth's time she was married to him—in her twentieth year, he being about ten years her senior—from the Earl of Hetheringham's. I was present, and never saw a lovelier bride; how distinctly, even at this distance of time, is her figure before my mind's eye! As her uncle, who felt as if a thorn had been at length plucked out of his side, led her down to the travelling carriage that was in readiness to convey them away, I was one of the last to whisper a hasty benison into the ear of the trembling blushing girl.—Gracious Heaven! could either of us at that moment have lifted the veil of futurity, and foreseen her becoming the subject of this last and dreadful passage from my Diary!

About three years afterwards was born the little patient I was now on my way to visit. During this considerable interval I had almost lost sight of them; for Major,

since become Colonel St Helen, after a year's travel on the Continent, engaged the delightful residence to which we were so hastily driving, and where their little son and heir was born. Here they lived in delightful retirement—only occasionally, and for very short periods, visiting the metropolis; the chief reason being Mrs St Helen's reluctance to renew her intercourse with Lord and Lady Hetheringham, or any member of their family. It was evident, from our conversation as we drove down, that their attachment towards each other continued unabated. The only drawback upon their happiness was a fear that he might be, ere long, summoned upon foreign service. When within about a mile of Densleigh, our conversation, as if by mutual consent, dropped—and we leaned back in the corners of the carriage in silence; he, doubtless, occupied with anxieties about his little son, and the probable state of matters he should meet on reaching home; I sinking into a reverie upon past times. I was anxious to see again one in whom I had formerly felt such interest—and sincerely rejoiced at her good fortune, not only in escaping the dangers to which she had been exposed, but in making so happy a marriage.

“Heavens!” exclaimed the Colonel, suddenly, who had been for the last few minutes incessantly putting his head out of the window—“look—they are”—his keen eye had discovered two female figures standing at the outer gate opening upon the high-road—“Drive on, coachman, for God's sake!”

“Don't alarm yourself, Colonel”—said I; adding, as we drew near enough to distinguish one of the figures pushing open the gate, and stepping into the road towards us—“for one of them can be no other than Mrs St

Helen ; and the other is her maid, with my little patient in her arms—positively ! Ha, ha, Colonel ! That looks very much like scarlet fever or measles !”

“ Certainly you are right,” replied the Colonel, with a sigh that seemed to let off all his anxiety. “ That is my wife, indeed—and the child : there can be no mistake—but how can they think of venturing out till, at all events, they are”——

Though I was at the moment rather vexed at having come so far, at such inconvenience, too, I soon made up my mind to it, and felt glad at the opportunity of seeing how the beautiful Miss Annesley would show in the character of Mrs St Helen—a mother.

“ You must give these poor reeking creatures a little refreshment, Colonel, before I can take them back, and me a little luncheon,” said I, with a smile, looking at my watch, and the horses.

“ Certainly—oh, of course ! Forgive me, dear Doctor, for having been so nervous and precipitate ! But you are a father yourself. 'Tis all my wife's fault, I can assure you, and I shall tell her she must make the apology due for bringing you down from London for nothing ! The fact is, that *I* never thought there was any thing the matter with the child ;”—which was, I thought, a very great mistake of the Colonel's.

“ I assure you I am infinitely better pleased to have the opportunity of seeing Mrs St Helen again, and in health and spirits, than to see her plunged into distress by the illness of her child—so pray say no more about it !”

As we approached, Mrs St Helen hastily gave her parasol into the hands of the maid, from whose arms she

snatched the child, and walked quickly up to the carriage door, as we drew up. For a moment I quite forgot the errand on which I had come, as close before me stood the Emma Annesley of a former day, a thousand times more lovely, to my eye, than I had ever seen her. She wore a light loose bonnet, of transparent white crape, and her shawl, which had been displaced in the hurry of seizing the child, hung with graceful negligence over her shoulders, displaying to infinite advantage a figure of ripening womanhood—the young mother, proud of the beautiful infant she bore in her arms—her expressive features full of animation; altogether she struck me as a fit subject for one of those airy and exquisite sketches with which Sir Thomas Lawrence was then occasionally delighting the world.

“ Oh, Doctor ——,” she commenced, in the same rich voice I so well remembered, holding out one of her hands to me as I descended the carriage steps—“ I am so delighted to see you again—but really,” looking at her husband, “ Arthur did so frighten me about the child, and I am not a *very* experienced mother—but I suppose it’s the same with all fathers—alarmed at *such* trifles?”——

“ Really, Emma, this is capital,” interrupted the Colonel, half-piqued and half-pleased, while I could not help laughing at them both—“ so it was *I*—but who was it, Emma, that came rushing into my dressing-room this morning—her hair half *en papillote*”——

“ Arthur, don’t be absurd—there’s no need”——

“ Well—I forgive you! It was all *my* fault, of course; but, thank God! here’s the young hero, seemingly as

well as ever he was in his life—and many, many happy returns of the day”——

“’Tis the child’s first birth-day, Doctor”—interrupted Mrs St Helen, eagerly, with a sweet smile.

The Colonel took the child out of his mother’s arms, and kissed him heartily. “But what apology can we make, Emma, to Doctor ——?”

“Oh, don’t say a syllable! I am sincerely glad that I have come, and the more so, that there was not the necessity for it that you supposed. My dear Mrs St Helen, how glad I am to see you,” I continued, as she took my arm, the Colonel preceding us with the child in his arms, who seemed, however, anxious to get back to his nurse. “I have often thought of you, and wondered where you had hid yourselves! But before we talk of past times, let me hear what it was that so alarmed you about that sweet little child?”

“Oh—why, I suspect it’s all my fault, Doctor—I was very foolish; but we do so love him, that we are afraid of the least thing. He’s so beautiful, that I fear we shall lose him—he’s too good—we should be *too* happy”——

“All mothers, Mrs St Helen, say that; but I want to hear whether we are right in dismissing all anxiety about the appearances that so alarmed you this morning.”

“I’m quite ashamed of it! It was evidently nothing but a little redness on his forehead, which was occasioned, no doubt, by the pressure of the pillow—and it quite disappeared before the Colonel had been gone half-an-hour—and the nurse did not tell me till afterwards—and we had no man here at the time to ride after the Colonel—

and so"—pushing about the end of her parasol upon the grass, and looking down, as we slowly followed the Colonel towards the house. I laughed heartily at the kind of sheepish air with which she confessed the slight occasion there had been for her alarm. She began again to apologize——

"Poh, poh, my dear Mrs St Helen, this has happened to me more than a hundred times ! but never when I less regretted it than I do now. I have had a delightful drive, and I have seen *you* looking so well and happy—you cannot think how rejoiced I am on your account ! What a contrast is your present life to that you led at the Earl of Hetheringham's !—you must be as happy as the day is long !"

"And so indeed I am ! I never, never knew what real happiness was till I knew Colonel St Helen ! We have never had a difference yet ! He worships the very ground"—She paused, hung her head, and her eyes filled with tears.

"He looks quite the soldier," said I, glancing at his tall and erect figure.

"Oh, yes, and he *is* ! He has the noblest disposition in the world ! so generous, and as simple as the little creature that he carries. You would hardly think him the same man when he is at home, that at the head of his regiment looks so cold, and stern, and formal. And he is as brave as"—her beautiful features were turned towards me, flushed with excitement—"Do you know he's been in three engagements, and I have heard from several officers that he is one of the most desperate and fearless"—

"Ah, you recollect those beautiful lines, Mrs St Helen," said I—

"The warrior's heart when touched by me,
Can as downy, soft, and yielding be,
As his own white plume that high amid death
Through the field bath shone, yet moves with a breath!"*

Her eyes, which were fixed intently upon me while I repeated these lines, filled with tears as I concluded, and she spoke not. "Where are those lines?" she began at length; but ashamed of her yet unsubdued emotion, she quickly turned aside her head, and left the sentence unfinished. Her little dog that came scampering down towards us, happily turned her thoughts.

"How very, very ridiculous!" she exclaimed, half-laughing, half-crying, pointing with her parasol to a light blue ribbon tied round the dog's neck, in a large knot or bow, the little animal now frisking merrily about her, and then rolling on the grass, evidently not knowing what to make of his gay collar. "The fact is, Doctor, that this being our little boy's first birth-day, my maid has determined that even the dog—Down, Fan! down! you little impudent creature—go and run after your young master;" and away bounded Fan, leaving us once more alone.

"When did you hear of the Hetheringhams last?"

"Oh, by the way," she answered eagerly, "only a day or two ago. And what do you think! Did you read that account of the elopement in the papers—I mean the one with such numbers of stars and initials?"

"Certainly, I recollect; but whom do they mean?"

“My fair proud cousin, Anne Sedley, and the youngest officer in Arthur’s regiment! Who would have thought it! She was always the most unkind of any of them towards me; but I am not the less sorry for her. Nothing but misery can come of an elopement; and how they are to live I do not know, for neither of them has any thing.”

“You see very little of the Earl and Countess, or your cousins, I suppose now?”

“We have scarcely met since my marriage, and ~~we~~ don’t regret it. Arthur does not like any of them, for I could not help telling him how they had treated me; and, besides, we see no body, nor do we wish, for we are not yet tired of each other and have plenty to do at home of one kind or another. In fact, we have only one thing that distresses us, a fear lest the Colonel may be ordered to join his regiment and go abroad. Oh! we tremble at the thought, at least I am sure that I do; especially if it should happen before November,” she added suddenly, faintly colouring. I understood her delicate intimation that she bade fair to become again a mother, and told her so. “What should I do in such a situation, all alone here—my husband gone, perhaps never to return?” she enquired tremulously. “I assure you, it often makes me very sad indeed—but here he comes.”

“Why, Emma! How serious! Positively in tears! What! have you been *regretting* to Doctor —— that you have not got a patient for him?”

“No, dearest Arthur—the fact is, we have been talking over past times!—I was telling him how happy we were in our solitude here”——

"But, I dare say, Doctor ——, with myself," said the Colonel, quickly, observing Mrs St Helen not yet to have entirely recovered from her emotion—"will not think the worse of Densleigh when we've had a little lunch."

"Well—I'll rejoin you in a few minutes," interrupted Mrs St Helen, turning from us.

"Aha," said the Colonel, as he led me into the room where lunch was spread—"she's gone to look after Master St Helen's dinner, I suppose; we shan't see her this quarter of an hour!—He must never eat a mouthful without her seeing it!—We won't wait, Doctor ——," and we sat down—for I had really not much time to lose. Densleigh certainly was a delightful residence—happily situated, and laid out with much taste and elegance. The room in which we were sitting opened upon a soft green, sloping down to the banks of a pleasant stream, and commanded an extensive prospect,—of which Mrs St Helen had recently completed a very beautiful water-colour sketch, which was suspended near where I sat.

"You must come some day, Doctor, and see my wife's port-feuille—for she really draws very beautifully. I'll try to get a sight of the picture she has nearly finished of our little Arthur—by Heaven, 'tis perfection!"

Here Mrs St Helen made her appearance; Master St Helen had made a very hearty dinner, and mamma was again in high spirits, and I persuaded her to take a glass of wine with me—but not to give me a sight of the mysteries which the Colonel had spoken of. She would not for the world let me see her half-finished daubs—

and so forth; and as for the others, she would show them all to me the next time I came, &c. &c. All lady-artists are alike, so I did not press the matter. A pleasant hour I passed at Densleigh—thinking, where was happiness to be found if not *there*! I was not allowed to leave before I had promised, never to come within a mile or two without calling upon them. They attended me to the door, where were drawn up my carriage, and the pony phaeton of Mrs St Helen, with two beautiful little greys, which also were bedight with the light-blue ribbons. Master St Helen and his maid were already seated in it, and I saw that Mrs St Helen longed to join them. Ah, you *are* a happy woman, thought I, as I drove off—you ought indeed to feel grateful to Heaven for having cast your lot in pleasant places,—long may you live the pride of your husband—mother, it may be, of a race of heroes!

About six months afterwards, my eye lit upon the following announcement in one of the newspapers:—"On the 2d instant, at Densleigh Grange, the lady of Colonel St Helen, of a son." I discovered, upon enquiry, that both mother and child were doing well—although the event so dreaded by Mrs St Helen had come to pass, and very greatly affected her spirits—the Colonel was ordered, with his regiment, upon foreign service. She had nearly succeeded in persuading him to quit the army; and it required all the influence of his most experienced personal friends, as well as a tolerably distinct intimation of opinion from the Royal Commander-in-Chief at the Horse-Guards, to prevent him from yielding to her entreaties. His destination was India; and with a very

heavy heart, six weeks before her accouchement took place, he bade her adieu—feeling that too probably it was for ever! He could not, however, tear himself away; twice did he return suddenly and unexpectedly to Densleigh, after having taken, as he had thought, a final farewell.—She insisted upon accompanying him, on the last occasion, to London, and witnessing his departure. When it had taken place, she returned to Densleigh, and for a while gave herself up to the most violent emotions of grief. Dreading the consequences to her, in her critical circumstances, Mrs Ogilvie, the sister of Colonel St Helen, came down to Densleigh, and succeeded in bringing Mrs St Helen up to town with her, hoping that change of scene, and the gaieties of the metropolis, might aid in recruiting her agitated spirits, and thereby prepare her for the trial she had so soon to undergo. She had not been long in London before she prevailed upon Mrs Ogilvie to drive with her to the Horse-Guards, and endeavour, if possible, to gain some intelligence as to the probable duration of her husband's absence, and of the nature of the service in which he was to be employed. Her heart almost failed her when the carriage drew up at the Horse-Guards. With some trepidation she gave the servant a card bearing her name, on which she had written a few lines stating the enquiry she had called to make, and desired him to take and wait with it for an answer.—“His Royal Highness will send to you, Ma'am, in a few moments,” said the servant on his return. Presently an officer in splendid uniform was seen approaching the carriage—he was an aide-de-camp of the Commander-in-Chief, and Mrs St Helen, with some additional agitation, recognised in him, as he stood before her, Car—

Alverley. To her it was indeed a most unexpected meeting ; and he seemed not free from embarrassment.

" His Royal Highness has directed me to inform you," said he, bowing politely, " that he regrets being unable to receive you, as he is now engaged with important business. He also directs me to say, in answer to your enquiry, that Colonel St Helen's stay will probably not exceed three years." While he was yet speaking, Mrs St Helen, overcome with agitation, hastily bowed to him, ordered the coachman to drive on, and sunk back on her seat exhausted.

" Emma ! Emma ! what can you mean ?" exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie, with much displeasure ; " I never saw such rudeness ! Yes," looking back towards the Horse-Guards, " he may well be astonished ! I declare he is still standing thunderstruck at your most extraordinary behaviour !"

" I—I cannot help it," murmured Mrs St Helen, faintly, " I thought I should have fainted. He so reminded me of Arthur—and—did you observe," she continued, sobbing, " nothing was said of the nature of the service ! Oh, I am sure I shall never see him again ! I wish, I wish I had not called at that odious place—I *might* have then hoped !" A long drive, however, through a cheerful part of the suburbs at length somewhat relieved her oppression ; but it was evident from her silence and her absent manner, that her thoughts continued occupied with what she had seen and heard at the Horse-Guards.

Captain Alverley *did* stand thunder-struck, and continued so standing for some moments after the carriage had driven out of sight. Had I then seen him, and

known that of his character which I now know, I should have been reminded of the poet's vivid picture of the deadly serpent—

“ Terribly beautiful the serpent lay,
Wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels
Fit for a tyrant's brow ; anon he flew,
Straight like an arrow, shot from his own wings! ”*

—or rather it might have appeared as though the rattlesnake were stunned for an instant by the suddenness of the appearance of his beautiful victim. No ; the fatal spring had not yet been made, nor had as yet the fascination of that death-dooming eye been *felt* by the victim !

Almost immediately upon Colonel St Helen's arrival in India, he was hurried into action ; and in little more than a year after his departure from England, the Gazette made most honourable mention of his name, as connected with a very important action in the Mahratta war. I could easily contrive, I thought, to call to-day upon Mrs St Helen, and so be, perhaps, the first to show her the Gazette ; and I made my arrangements accordingly. Putting the important document in my pocket, I drove in the direction of Densleigh, having a patient in the neighbourhood. I left my carriage in the road, and walked up the avenue to the house. I trode so noiselessly upon the “ soft smooth-shaven green,” that my approach was not perceived by the occupants of the room in which we had lunched on the occasion already mentioned. They

* The Pelican Island ; by James Montgomery.

were Mrs St Helen and her little son Arthur. The latter was evidently enacting the soldier, having a feather stuck in his cap, and a broad red ribbon round his waist, to which was attached a sword; and, in order to complete his resemblance to the figure of an officer, he had a drum fastened in front of him, to the harmonious sound of which he was marching fiercely round the room; while his mother—her beautiful countenance turned fully and fondly towards him—was playing upon the piano, "See the conquering hero comes!" She perceived me approach, and started for a moment; but hastily motioning me not to appear and disturb what was going on, I stepped aside.

"And what does brave papa do, Arthur?" said she, ceasing to play. He stopped, dropped his drum-sticks, drew his little sword with some difficulty from its sheath, and after appearing to aim one or two blows at some imaginary enemy, returned it to its scabbard, and was marching with a very dignified air past his mother, when she rose from her seat, and suddenly clasping the young warrior in her arms, smothered him with kisses.

"Pray walk in, dear Doctor," said she, approaching me, after setting down the child—"you must forgive a poor lonely mother's weakness!"

"So, then, you have heard of it?"

"Heard of what?" she enquired hurriedly, slightly changing colour. I took out the Gazette. "Oh, come in, come in, and we'll sit down—I—I begin to feel—rather faint;" her eyes fastened upon the paper I held in my hands. We sat down together upon the sofa. As soon as, with the aid of a vinaigrette, she had recovered a little from her agitation, I read to her—who listened

breathless—the very flattering terms in which Colonel St Helen's conduct in a most sanguinary action, was mentioned in the despatch, with the gratifying addition, that his name was not included in the list of either killed or wounded. “Oh, my noble gallant Arthur!” she murmured, bursting into tears, “I knew he would acquit himself well! I wonder, Arthur, if he thought *of us* when he was in the field!” snatching up her son—who, with his little hands resting on her lap, stood beside her, looking up concernedly in her face—and folding him to her bosom. A flood of tears relieved her excitement. In a transport she kissed the Gazette, and thanked me fervently for having brought it to her. She presently rung the bell, and desired the butler to be sent for, who soon made his appearance.

“Are they at dinner?” she enquired. He bowed. “Then give them two bottles of wine, and let them drink their master's health; for”——

She could not finish the sentence, and I added for her —“Colonel St Helen has been engaged in a glorious action, and has gained great distinction.”——

“I'll give it, ma'am—sir—I will,” interrupted the impatient butler; “we'll be sure to drink my master's health, ma'am—his best health—and yours, ma'am—and the young gentleman; Lord, sir, it couldn't be otherwise! Is master hurt, sir?”

“Not a hair, I believe,” I answered.

“Lord Almighty!” he exclaimed, unconsciously snapping his fingers, as his hands hung down, “only to think of it, ma'am—how glad you must be, ma'am—and young master there, ma'am; but how could it be otherwise, ma'am?”

"Thank you, Bennet, thank you! make yourselves happy, for I am sure I am," replied Mrs St Helen, as well as her agitation would allow her—and the butler withdrew. Poor Mrs St Helen asked me a hundred questions, which I had no more means of answering than herself; and, in short, was evidently greatly excited. As I stood at the open window, which looked on the lawn, admiring for a moment the prospect it commanded, my eye caught the figure of a cavalry officer, in undress uniform, followed by his groom, and cantering easily towards Densleigh.

"Who can this be, Mrs St Helen?" said I, pointing him out to her, as she rose from the sofa.

"Who, Doctor? where?" she enquired, hastily.

"It is an officer, in undress uniform, evidently coming hither,—I suppose he brings you official information." At that moment the approaching figures were again, for an instant, visible at a sudden turn of the road; and Mrs St Helen, slightly changing colour, exclaimed, with, as I thought, a certain tremour easily accounted for—"Oh, yes—I know who it is—Captain Alverley, aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-chief—no doubt he comes to tell me what I know already, through your kindness—and—he may also bring me letters."

"Very possibly!—Well, dear Mrs St Helen, I most cordially congratulate you on this good news; but, pray, don't suffer yourself to be excited," said I, taking up my hat and stick.

"Don't hurry away, Doctor," she replied. I took her hand in mine. It was cold, and trembled. I hastily repeated my advice, having already staid longer than my engagements allowed, and took my leave. As I reached my

carriage, Captain Alverley—if such was the officer's name—was just entering the gate, which his groom was holding open for him.

“ Well,” thought I, as I drove off, “ if I were Colonel St Helen, and six or seven thousand miles off, I should not exactly *prefer a tête-à-tête*, even on the subject of my own magnificent exploits, between my beautiful wife and that handsome officer,”—for certainly, as far as my hurried scrutiny went, I never had seen a man with a finer person and air, or a more prepossessing countenance. That was the first time that I had ever seen or heard of Captain Alverley.

Some little time after this occurrence, the death of an elder brother entitled Colonel St Helen to an income of several thousands a-year, and a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Berkeley Square. This was an event the Colonel had anticipated before leaving England, as his brother had long been in a declining state of health: and he had arranged with his solicitor and man of business, that should the event take place before the expiration of the term for which he held Densleigh, efforts were to be made to continue the lease, and the house in ——— Street was to be let, but not for longer than three years. If, however, Densleigh could not be secured for a further lease, then Mrs St Helen was to occupy ——— Street, till the Colonel's return to England. Colonel St Helen's brother died shortly before the lease of Densleigh expired, and its proprietor, wishing to live in it himself, declined to renew the lease. The necessary arrangements therefore were made for removing Mrs St Helen, with her establishment, to ——— Street—a noble residence, which the Colonel had left orders should, in the contingency which

had happened, be furnished entirely according to Mrs St Helen's wishes. He had also made the proper arrangements for putting her in possession of an additional allowance of £2000 a-year ; and under the judicious superintendence of his solicitor, all these arrangements were speedily and satisfactorily carried into effect ; and Mrs St Helen was duly installed the mistress of her new and elegant residence, with a handsome equipage, a full retinue of servants, and a clear income of £3500 a-year, including her former allowance. Oh, unhappy, infatuated husband, to have made such an arrangement ! Would that you had never permitted your lovely wife to enter such scenes of dazzling danger—that you had rather placed her in secret retirement till your return—far from the “garish eye” of the world—even in some lone sequestered spot

“ Where glid the sunbeams through the latticed boughs,
And fell like dew-drops on the spangled ground,
To light the diamond-beetle on his way ;
Where cheerful openings let the sky look down
Into the very heart of solitude,
On little garden-plots of social flowers,
That crowded from the shades to peep at daylight ;
Or where impermeable foliage made
Midnight at noon, and chill damp horror reign'd
O'er dead fallen leaves and slimy funguses ;”

—*any where* but in London. It was done, however, at the impulse of a generous confiding nature—though in fatal error—for the best !

I was driving home down — Street one evening alone, on my return from a dinner party, when I was stopped for a moment by a crowd of carriages opposite Lady —'s ; and recollected that I had promised to look in, if possible. I therefore got out, and made my way as

soon as I could into the crowded mansion. Can any thing be absurder than such a scene? I always disliked balls and routes; but such as *these* must be perfectly intolerable, I fancy, to any sober, rational person. It was full five minutes before I could force my way up stairs and along the spacious landing, to the door of the principal room, into which "*all the*" unhappy "*world*" had squeezed itself, and was undergoing purgatory. How many hundreds of ladies' maids and valets would have gone distracted to see their mistresses and masters so unable to display their handiwork—standing jammed together!—but this is enjoyment and fashion—why should *I* find fault with those who experience pleasure in such scenes? After gazing on the glistening confused scene for a moment, admiring the fortitude of those who were enduring the heat and pressure without a murmur, perceiving no one that I knew, at least within speaking distance, I passed on towards another room, in search of Lady —, whom I wished to show that I had kept my promise. The second room was much less crowded, and real, not make-believe, dancing was going forward.

"She's very beautiful, is she not?" said a gentleman just before me, to one of the two ladies who leaned upon his arms, and who seemed looking critically at the dancers—"Y—e—s, rather," was the answer, in a languid, drawling tone.

"Waltzes well enough," said the other lady, "but for my part I quite dislike to see it."

"Dislike to see it? You joke," interrupted the gentleman; "why do you dislike it? Upon my honour, I think it's quite a treat to see such waltzing as theirs."

"Oh, I dare say its all correct enough, if one comes to

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on my pointing out his figure to her at Densleigh. There were four or five couples waltzing; and those whom I was so eagerly observing, a second time stopped immediately in front of where I stood—he apologizing for the force with which he had come against me. She, too, observed it, and turned her head to see to whom her partner had apologized. The instant she recognised me, her features became suffused with crimson. Her companion observed it, and looked at me with a surprised and haughty air, as if designing to discourage me from speaking to her. I was not, however, to be deterred by such a trifle.

“How are you, Doctor?”—said, or rather stammered Mrs St Helen, giving me her hand, which I thought trembled a little.

“When did you hear from the Colonel last?” I enquired presently, disregarding the insulting air of impatience manifested by Captain Alverley, who could not avoid observing the slight agitation and surprise my presence had occasioned his beautiful partner.

“Oh—I heard from India—not for several months—oh, yes, I did, about six weeks ago—He was very well when he wrote.” Partly with the fatigue of waltzing, and partly through mental discomposure, she was evidently agitated. She could have continued her conversation with me, but Captain Alverley insisted on taking her in quest of refreshment. I soon after quitted the ball, and made any further attempt to see Lady ——; and as the ladies were so much occupied with the casual conversation just described, that I walked several paces before I recollected that I had seen nothing of her—and yet I felt, or

grieved, as though I had. Good God! was this the way in which Mrs St Helen testified her love for her generous, confiding husband—for him who had so affectionately secured her, by anticipation, the means of enjoying his expected accession of fortune—for him who was at that moment, possibly, gallantly charging in action with the enemies of his country—or who might have already received the wound which rendered her a widow and her children fatherless? What accursed influence had deadened her keen sensibilities—had impaired her delicate perception of propriety? I began to feel heavy misgivings about this Captain Alverley—in short, I reached home full of vexing thoughts—for Mrs St Helen had suddenly sunk many, many degrees in my estimation. She did not appear to me to be the same woman that I had seen twelve months before at Densleigh—the tender mother, the enthusiastic wife,—*what* had come to her?

I thought it not improbable that I should, in the morning, receive a message from her, requesting a visit during the day; and I was not mistaken—for while sitting at breakfast, her servant brought me a note to that effect—requesting me to call, if convenient, before one o'clock. I foresaw that our interview would be of a different description to any former one. However uneasy I felt on her account, I did not desire to be placed in the disagreeable position of receiving explanations and excuses which nothing had called forth but her own consciousness of impropriety, and my involuntary air of astonishment on the preceding evening. I had so many engagements that day, that it was nearly two o'clock before I could reach Mrs St Helen's. She sate in the drawing-room, with her sister-in-law, Mrs Ogilvie, who had called about

an hour before,—a very elegant, sweet woman, some ten or twelve years her senior. I had evidently interrupted an unpleasant interview between them; for the former was in tears, and the latter looked agitated,—while, consequently, all of us looked rather embarrassed.

“ Doctor ——” said Mrs St Helen, quickly, after a few ordinary enquiries, “ now, do pray tell me, did you see any thing objectionable in my”——

“ Emma! how *can* you be so foolish,” interrupted Mrs Ogilvie, rising, with much displeasure. “ I am really extremely vexed with you!” and she quitted the room without regarding Mrs St Helen’s entreaties that she would stay. I should have liked to follow her, or that she had remained during my brief visit. I proceeded immediately, with a matter-of-fact air, to make a few professional enquiries.

“ But, my dear Doctor ——,” said she, earnestly, without answering my questions—“ do tell me candidly, what *did* you see so very particular—and amiss—in my conduct last night?”

“ What did I see amiss? Dear Mrs St Helen, you amaze me! I had not been at Lady ——’s above a minute or two before we met, and I left almost directly after”——

“ Then what *did* your look mean? Do, dear Doctor, tell me what that look meant—I really could not help observing it—and I can’t forget it.”

“ Mrs St Helen! you really quite take me by surprise;—you must have strangely mistaken my looks.”

“ Perhaps you don’t—I suppose—that is—I know what you meant—was it that you didn’t admire married women waltzing? Now, *do* tell me, for I feel quite unhappy.”

"Well, as you are so *very* anxious to know my opinion, I have no hesitation in saying a"——

"Oh, pray go on, Doctor!"—interrupted Mrs St Helen, impatiently.

"Why, all I was going to say is, that I certainly do not feel *particularly* pleased—but I may be quite absurd—at seeing married women waltzing, especially *mothers*."

"Dear Doctor, and why not? You can't think how much I respect your opinion; but surely, good heavens! what can there be indelicate"——

"Mrs St Helen! I did not use the word"——

"Well, but I know you meant it; why won't you be candid now, Doctor? But *had* you no other reason?"—Her eyes filled with tears.

"My dear Mrs St Helen! what *reason* could I possibly have?" I interrupted, gravely—wishing to put an end to what threatened to become a very unpleasant discussion. "I have given you an answer to the strange question you asked; and now suppose"——

"Oh, Doctor, it is useless to attempt putting me off in this way—I can read a look as well as any one. I must have been blind not to see yours. The fact is—I suppose"—she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which were again beginning to glisten with tears—"if you would but be honest—did you not think I was wrong in waltzing, when my husband—is abroad—and—and—in danger?" She sobbed.

"Really, Mrs St Helen, you will persist in making my position here so unpleasant, that I must indeed take my leave." At that moment I heard the sound of a horse's feet approaching in the street. Mrs St Helen heard it too; and hurrying to the bell, pulled it with un-

disguised trepidation. As soon as the servant entered she said, in a vehement tone, "Not at home! Not at home!" In spite of her efforts to conceal it, she trembled violently, and her face became paler than before. Determined to ascertain whether or not my sudden suspicions were correct, I rose, intending to walk to the window, when I expected to see Captain Alverley; but she prevented me, doubtless purposely,—extending her arm towards me, and begging me to feel her pulse. So I was kept engaged till I heard the hall-door closed, after an evident parley, and the retreating of the equestrian visitor. I had been requested to call before *one* o'clock—it was now past two: had she engaged to ride out with Captain Alverley?

"Well, what do you think of my pulse, Doctor?" enquired Mrs St Helen, breathing more freely, but still by no means calm.

"Why, it shows a high degree of nervous irritability and excitement, Mrs St Helen."

"Very probably; and no wonder! People are so cruel, and so scandalous."—She burst into tears. "Here's my sister been lecturing me this hour—half killing me! She insists"—

"Pray restrain your feelings, Mrs St Helen! Why all this agitation? I am not your father confessor," said I, endeavouring to assume a gay air. Mrs St Helen paused and sobbed heavily.

"She tells me that my behaviour is so—so light, that I am getting myself talked about."—She seemed exceedingly distressed. "Now, dear Doctor, if you really love me, as a very, very old friend—I'm sure I love *you*!—do tell me, candidly, have *you* ever heard any thing?"

"Never, Mrs St Helen, I solemnly assure you, have I

heard your name mentioned, to my knowledge, till last night, when I happened to overhear two ladies, who seemed to be wondering at your waltzing"——

"Oh," she interrupted me with great vivacity, "I know who they were! My cousins! My sweet, good-natured cousins—Oh, the vipers! Wherever I go they hiss at me! But I'll endure it no longer! I'll drive to —— Square this very day, and insist"——

"If you *do*, Mrs St Helen, and mention one syllable of what I have perhaps unguardedly told you, and what I could not help overhearing, we never meet again."

"Then what *am* I to do?" she exclaimed, passionately. "Am I to endure all this? Must I suffer myself to be slandered with impunity?"

"God forbid, Mrs St Helen, that you should be slandered."

"Then what *am* I to do?"

"Give no occasion," I answered, more dryly perhaps than I had intended.

"Give no occasion, indeed!" echoed Mrs St Helen, with an indignant air, rising at the same time, and walking rapidly to and fro. "And who says that I ever *have* given occasion?" fixing her bright eye upon me with a kind of defiance.

"Mrs St Helen, you greatly grieve and surprise me by all this. You ask me again and again for an answer to a very strange question, and when at length you get one, you are affronted with me for giving it. I declare that I know nothing whatever about your conduct one way or the other. But since you have forced me to speak, very reluctantly—for I have no business to enter into any such matters—I can but repeat what I have said,

that if the tongue of scandal and envy is busy with you, you must be extraordinarily on your guard to let your conduct give them the lie !”

“ My dear Doctor,” said she, suddenly resuming her seat, and speaking in the sweetest and most sorrowful tone of voice, “ I—I *will* be more guarded ; I—I will not waltz again.” Sobs prevented her going on. I took her hand cordially.

“ I am delighted to hear you say so, Mrs St Helen. I know well your high honour, your purity of principle ; but, believe me, your innocent unsuspecting frankness may yet expose you often to danger. Why may I not tell you the feelings of my heart, dear Mrs St Helen ? they are towards you more those of a father than a friend or physician. You are young, why should I not tell you what you know—you are very beautiful ;” she buried her face in her handkerchief, and sobbed almost convulsively. “ The men of the world—of fashion—into whose way you have been lately so much thrown, are often very unprincipled and base ; they may, with subtle wickedness, contrive snares for you that your innocent inexperience cannot detect till perhaps too late.” She involuntarily squeezed my hand, for I still held hers, but attempted no reply. “ Now, may I tell you what was really passing through my mind last night at Lady ——’s ?” She spoke not, but continued her face in her handkerchief. “ I was thinking that, perhaps at the moment you were being whirled round the room by that Captain Alverley, your gallant husband, charging at the head of his regiment, might be tumbling dead from his horse.”

“ Ah ! and so did I the moment I saw you !” almost

shrieked Mrs St Helen, suddenly raising her pallid face from the handkerchief in which it had been buried. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing her going off into violent hysterics. After a long struggle with her tumultuous feelings, "O Arthur, Arthur!" she exclaimed, in such a tone as brought the tears suddenly into my eyes—"if I have ever wronged you in thought, in word, or in deed!"——

"Impossible!—perfectly impossible!" I exclaimed with energy, in a cheerful exulting tone.

"No!" she exclaimed, sitting suddenly upright, while a noble expression beamed in her excited features, which were blanched with her vehement emotions. "No! I am his wife! I am the mother of his children! I have not betrayed them; I will not!"

I looked at her with astonishment; the wild smile passed quickly from her pallid, beautiful countenance, and she sunk back on the sofa in a swoon. I instantly summoned assistance, and her maid, with one or two other female servants, presently entered hastily with water and smelling-salts.

"I knew she was ill, sir," said her maid Joyce: "she's not been quite herself, I may say, this several weeks. This constant going out at nights doesn't do for her, and I've often told her so, sir!"

"I suppose she goes out a great deal in the evenings?"

"Oh yes, sir; three or four times a-week, and often-er, sir"

"Is it generally late before she comes back?"

"Never hardly before three or four o'clock in the morning, sir; and so tired and knocked up, as one may

say"—Here Mrs St Helen began to revive. She seemed very much annoyed when she had thoroughly recovered her consciousness, at being surrounded by the servants. After giving her a few directions—for she was suffering slightly from a cold, I left, promising to call upon her again in a day or two.

Three or four times a-week and oftener ! The words rung in my ears long after Mrs St Helen was out of my sight. Was this the same woman that had once enquired with such a passionate air, whether Colonel St Helen ever thought of *her* and her children, when he was going to the field, and surrounded by death ? How would that gallant heart of his have been wrung, at such a moment, had he known in what manner she conducted herself during his absence ! Despite what had recently passed between us, I trembled for Mrs St Helen : I knew not how far she might be already committed—to what extent her light and thoughtless behaviour might have given encouragement to those ever ready to take advantage of such conduct : her emotions had been violent, and were no doubt genuine ; and yet the agonies I had been witnessing might have been little else than the mere spasms of declining virtue !

Of Captain Alverley—the *Honourable* Charles Alverley—I regret that I should have to speak at any length. But I must—he is one of the main figures in this painful picture—he is the DESTROYER. He belonged to a high family ; was a well-educated and accomplished man—of handsome person and an irresistible address ; yet, nevertheless, as heartless a villain as ever existed. He was a systematic seducer. The fair sex he professed to idolize ; yet he could not look upon them but with a

lustful and corrupting eye. He was proverbial for his gallantries; he made every thing subservient to them. His character was well known, and yet, alas! he was every where esteemed in society, in whose thoughtless parlance he was—a gentleman! Who could resist the gay, the bland, the graceful Alverley, with his coronet in expectation?

Why—asks one, in happy ignorance of the world about him—is such a wretch created and suffered to infest the fairest regions of humanity? It might as well be asked, why has the Almighty created the cobra or the crocodile!

Captain Alverley, as already intimated, had excited a strong interest in Miss Annesley's heart before she had ever seen or heard of Colonel St Helen. Having discovered her want of fortune, he withdrew, on the plea already mentioned, from the competition for her hand; but he never lost sight of her. He had, in fact, determined, come what would, on effecting the ruin of Mrs St Helen; and he set to work patiently, and, as he often considered, *scientifically*. It has been supposed—though with what truth I know not—that he had something or other to do with poor Colonel St Helen's summons upon foreign service; and the moment that he had sailed, the fiend commenced his operations. They were long retarded, however, by the strictly secluded life Mrs St Helen led at Densleigh, occupied with her holy and happy maternal duties. Would to Heaven that she had never quitted the one, or been diverted, even for a moment, from the performance of the other! The accidental rencontre at the Horse-Guards I have already mentioned. The instant that he was commissioned by his

Royal master to bear a kind message to Mrs St Helen, he determined upon the demeanour he should assume—one at once delicate and deferential—fraught with sympathy for her evident suffering. Observing her agitation he did not attempt, by a look or a word, to remind her that they had ever met before ; confining himself, with perfect taste, to the delivery of the message with which he had been charged. When Mrs St Helen abruptly drove off, in the manner already described, his vile heart leaped for joy. His practised eye saw that her agitation was not *entirely* attributable to the errand on which she had come. He certainly had remained standing in the manner Mrs Ogilvie had described, but it was not in astonishment ; he was pondering what had just happened ; and in a few moments returned to the room he had quitted, with a flush on his countenance, and the consciousness that he had commenced his infernal campaign. Some six or eight months afterwards a packet arrived at the Horse-Guards from India, enclosing a letter, which the writer, Colonel St Helen, begged might be thrown into the post for Mrs St Helen. Of this, however, Captain Alverley took charge, and that very afternoon rode down to Densleigh, and delivered it with his own hands into those of the servant—" with Captain Alverley's compliments"—when he rode off. He justly considered that his delicacy in doing so could not but be appreciated. It was so !

Had Mrs St. Helen then closely and faithfully examined her heart, in order to ascertain the exact nature of her feelings on finding that Captain Alverley had himself brought her a letter with the immediate receipt of which he supposed she would be so much gratified,

and that he had abstained from personally delivering it;—had she done *this*, her terror-stricken eye might have detected the serpent, dim-glistening in dreadful beauty, beneath the concealing foliage—and her sudden shudder would have been her salvation. But she did not—she could not. Not hers was the salutary habit or the power of self-examination; not hers, alas! had been the blessed vigilance of a fond, an experienced, and a virtuous mother, exercised over her young years!—Already, in the sight of God, had commenced the guilt of Mrs St Helen, who yet nevertheless was unconscious of the presence or approach of evil, even in thought. But why? Because of her fatal remissness in guarding the “approaches of her heart.” Had she *then* asked help from Heaven, she might have perceived the danger which nothing but Heaven’s light could have detected. “The tempter,” says an old divine, “is then ever nighest, when we think him farthest off.” Yes, a subtle poison had already been imperceptibly infused, in infinitely small quantity, it may be, into the heart of Mrs St Helen—a poison of slow but inevitable operation. *O woman, this is the point of danger!* I repeat it, that, harsh and unjust as it may appear, from the moment alluded to, Mrs St Helen became an accomplice in effecting her own ruin. Not that she had as yet sensibly or consciously suffered any injury; the *wife* and the *mother* were still supreme in Mrs St Helen; her quick and ardent feelings knew as yet of no other objects, no other outlets, than these.—O unhappy woman! why was it that when you beheld Captain Alverley approaching to bring you the intelligence of your husband’s triumphs, you trembled? Why was that faint flutter at your heart? Had not *I* already communicated

all he came to tell? What feelings flitted through your bosom when, leaning against the window, you followed his retiring figure? Ought not the conscious difference between the feelings with which you were disposed to regard him, and *me*,—or any other indifferent person,—to have sounded the alarm, in your husband's name, in every chamber of your heart? Ill-fated woman! dare you appeal to Heaven to testify *all* the feelings with which you heard of quitting Densleigh for London? Were you even reluctant to take that step because of your dislike to encounter Alverley? Would you avow the gratification with which you found yourself becoming intimate with his distinguished family? Alas! did you not feel a secret satisfaction at finding yourself sitting at Lord ——'s dinner-table, with Captain Alverley beside you? Had not your perception of right and wrong been suddenly confused and disturbed, how could you tolerate his altered demeanour towards you? Were you delighted, or startled, at the ardent glance with which he regarded you? Did you not observe and tremblingly appreciate the tact with which attentions, exquisitely flattering and gratifying to *you*, were concealed from all others? Did a sense of security from observation begin to evince itself when you perceived the skill with which his infernal movements were directed? What alteration of feeling did not all this imply? Dreadful questions—how clearly does your disinclination to answer them, indicate the nature of the change you are undergoing!

Mrs St Helen had not been in London half a-year, before Captain Alverley felt that he was triumphing—that his long-continued and deeply-laid schemes were conducting him to success. The first—the very first step,

he had felt to be every thing ; it had gained him an interest, however faint, in her feelings, and he cherished it with the most exquisite skill, the most watchful assiduity. He kept *himself* ever in the back-ground. He would excite her feelings with his generous and eloquent eulogies of Colonel St Helen's conduct abroad ; in the middle of one of them he suddenly became confused, heaved a faint sigh, and resumed his conversation with ill-disguised embarrassment. He busied himself—he took infinite pains—at least he led her to think so—in procuring the return home of Colonel St Helen ; thus, in short, and in a thousand other ways, he at length disarmed Mrs St Helen by lulling her suspicions, or rather preventing their being excited. Consummately skilled in the workings of the female heart, he guided his conduct according to the indications he discovered.—In handing her one night to her carriage from the opera, he made a point of insulting a gentleman, who, with a lady on his arm, was hurrying on before Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen. A hurried whisper between the two gentlemen satisfied Mrs St Helen that there was mischief in preparation. “ For Heaven's sake ! ” she whispered, in excessive trepidation—but he gently forced her into the carriage, and permitted it to drive off without his uttering a word. He gained his end. The evening papers of the ensuing day duly announced an “ affair of honour ” between the “ Marquis of * * * * *,” attended by, &c., and Captain A. B. C., attended, &c. “ The meeting arose out of an alleged affront offered by the noble Marquis to a young and beautiful lady, &c. &c., whom the Captain was conducting to her carriage,” &c. &c. Very strange to say,

neither party did the other any harm!—Captain Alverley, on the next opera night, found his way to her box.

“Captain Alverley! how *could* you”—commenced Mrs St Helen, very earnestly.

“My dear Mrs St Helen!” was the only reply, with a look that none could give but Captain Alverley. The skilful strategist knew the amount of his gain, and was in ecstasies.

In the progress of “the affair,” Captain Alverley’s next step was to accustom Mrs St Helen to hear herself called a flirt, and to have his name, on such occasions, always judiciously coupled with hers. The first time that ever she waltzed with him—which he justly regarded as an open triumph—was in consequence of a very heated altercation she had had with Mrs Ogilvie, who had freely charged her with culpable lightness of conduct with reference to Captain Alverley; the consequence of which was, that Mrs St Helen went, as she had angrily threatened, to a ball, where, casting a look of defiance at her sister-in-law, she instantly accepted Captain Alverley’s invitation, infinitely to his astonishment. He saw his position, and behaved with prudence. After one or two rounds, he led her, with an air of the properest deference in the world, to a seat, and paid her no marked attentions whatever during the evening. He perceived that her lynx-eyed sister watched his every movement; and for upwards of a fortnight he suspended all but the most ordinary and casual civilities and attentions to Mrs St Helen. Why did not the infatuated woman at once break through all the meshes with which she was now conscious of being surrounded? Why did no sudden alarm of virtue—no Heaven-inspired strength—enable her to

"flee like a bird from the snare of the fowler?" Alas, that I should have to write it! *She did not now wish to do so.* Not that yet even she contemplated the idea of positive guilt—vastly far from it. She was so conscious of her own strength, as to prevent all apprehensions on that score. It is true she was occasionally sensible, with a heart-flutter and cheek suffused, of an interest in Captain Alverley, that was inconsistent with the undivided affection due to her husband; she went not further consciously, but how far was this!—She consoled herself with the notion that it was certainly rather coquettish—and that was almost universal. The plain truth was, she began to instigate towards Captain Alverley feelings which she no longer dared to scrutinize. Her vanity, again, would not suffer her to part with so gay and dazzling a follower—"and she was surely able to take care of herself!"

Once or twice I called upon Mrs St Helen, in pursuance of the promise I made, but without seeing her, as she had just gone out. This might, or it might not be true. If she was denying herself to me, it must have been on account of what had taken place on the occasion alluded to; and was it that she was ashamed of her frankness—of the extent of her admissions, or that she regretted having made them from other considerations? I was driving, one afternoon, through the Park, on my way to a patient near Cumberland Gate, when I happened to overtake the open carriage of Mrs St Helen, driving very slowly, she being in conversation with an equestrian who walked his horse alongside,—and I soon detected in him Captain Alverley. I perceived with a hurried look in passing, that she was listening intently to what he was saying—looking down, and slightly colouring. I felt sick

at heart for her ! The next time that I saw her at home, she seemed very calm, and sensibly colder in her manner towards me than I had ever seen her before. She made not—nor of course did I—the slightest allusion to our late deeply interesting conversation. In answer to my enquiries, she said that she was in very good health, except that she did not now sleep so soundly as heretofore, and her appetite had also declined—the usual consequences, I told her, of a life of London dissipation—of irregular hours, excitement, and fatigue.

“ As I feel rather solitary in this large house,” said she, “ I have invited a Miss Churchill, a distant relation of the Colonel’s, to pay me a visit. She’s a very sweet, good girl, and I have no doubt we shall be inseparable.” While she said this a slight colour mounted into her cheek, which set me speculating upon what she had just told me. Was then her summons to Miss Churchill a *signal of distress* ? Was it that she began to feel her danger—that she wished a protector—some one who should be indeed, as she said, inseparable from her—ever by her side—whose presence might check, if not prevent, the increasing ardour and attentions of Captain Alverley ? Faint effort of endangered virtue !—But it *was* an effort, and I rejoiced to see it made.

“ When do you purpose leaving town ?” I enquired.

“ Leaving town !” she exclaimed quickly—“ why, dear Doctor, *should* I leave town ? The season not yet at its height even ! Besides, I hate the country—I never heartily liked it.”

“ I thought, Mrs St Helen”——

“ Oh yes,” she interrupted, hastily, “ I know what you mean. Densleigh was certainly a pleasant place enough,

but we've lost it." She paused for a moment, and added—"but I suppose that about August we must go down somewhere or other"—

"The sea-air will do wonders for you, and for the children."

"Yes—I daresay it would," she replied, with rather an indifferent air—"but at present they are very well; I always have them taken to the Park—and where can there be a finer air?" Here some visitors were announced, the servant at the same time laying down six or seven notes and cards of invitation upon one of the tables.

About a month afterwards, I received the following note from Mrs St Helen:—

"Dear Doctor,—Will you call in here in the course of the morning, to see one of the children, who, I fear, is poorly? Jones tells me she thinks it is the measles. I hope it is not any thing worse—the scarlet fever, for instance, or small-pox. But you can soon tell. I shall wait at home for you till two.

"Ever yours,

"E. ST HELEN.

"P.S.—I have never had either of these horrid complaints myself, and feel rather nervous.

— Street, 10 o'clock."

What a dismal contrast this note afforded, I thought, laying it down with a sigh, to the eager, alarmed summons she had sent on a former occasion, on a most trifling, or rather imaginary emergency, from Densleigh! A little after two o'clock I was at — Street, and was shown up immediately into the nursery. Mrs St Helen's

pony phaeton was at the door, and she was sitting, ready dressed for a drive, on the corner of the bed in which lay her younger child. Her handkerchief, saturated with Eau de Cologne, was every now and then lifted to her face, as though she dreaded infection. She looked very beautiful—her dress infinitely became her—and she did not seem particularly agitated.

“ I was beginning to get fidgety, Doctor ; I was afraid I should not see you,” said she, rising to meet me. I assured her that I had been unexpectedly detained. “ And what do you think of the little love ? I was afraid he was ailing a little yesterday—his eyes looked very heavy yesterday evening, didn’t they, Jones ? ” turning to the maid.

“ Yes, ma’am,” she replied eagerly, directing an affectionate and anxious look to the child. “ You may recollect, ma’am, I asked you yesterday afternoon, if we hadn’t better send for ”——

“ Oh yes—I dare say—I think you did, Jones,” interrupted Mrs St Helen, quickly, and with rather a displeased air. “ Jones is always terrified with every change in the child’s face ! But do you think there is any thing really the matter, Doctor ? ”

After a little examination, I told her that I thought the child was sickening for the measles.

“ Is he indeed, sweet little lamb ! ”—she exclaimed, looking really kindly at the child. “ You don’t think it’s scarlet fever, now ? ” after a moment’s pause, turning anxiously towards me, and gently agitating her fragrant handkerchief.

“ No,” I replied—“ at present I think it is decidedly the measles.”

"Measles are not dangerous, are they?"

"La, ma'am!" interrupted Jones, who was kneeling at the side of the bed, near the child—her eyes filling with tears—"excuse me, ma'am, but my poor sister's child died of them only a twelvemonth ago."

"Oh, nonsense, Jones—why do you try to alarm me in this way? There's no such *very* great danger, Doctor, is there?"—turning towards me with more interest in her manner than she had hitherto manifested.

"I sincerely hope not! At present I can assure you there is every appearance of its being a mild attack."

"Only feel how hot his little hand is, ma'am!" said Jones.

Mrs St Helen did not remove her gloves, but said to me—"Of course he is rather feverish just now!"

After giving a few directions concerning the temperature of the room, his food, and one or two other little matters, I left, and descended to the drawing-room, to write a prescription.

"I shall return home by four, Jones," said Mrs St Helen, also quitting the room, and following me—"be sure you pay him every attention—Don't remove your eyes from him for a moment!"

"I'm quite delighted to find there's no danger, Doctor," said she, seating herself beside me, as I began to write.

"Indeed, my dear madam," I replied, determined not to let matters pass so very easily, "we must not be too sanguine. There are two forms of measles,—the one a mild, the other very malignant. At present I cannot undertake to say with certainty which of the two it is." She continued silent for a few moments.—"I think I

told you, in my note, that I believed I had never had the measles?—Are they really catching from a child to a grown up person?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Heavens!—I—I'll have pastiles burnt all over the house all day? Dear me! it would be dreadful if *I* were to catch it,—because" (she added hastily) "of dear little Arthur!"

"Well, we must hope for the best," said I, quietly folding up my prescription, and requesting that it might be sent to the druggist's without delay; and hastily taking my leave, with a countenance that, had she been as sensitive as in former times, she might perceive somewhat clouded with disapprobation. Was the mother's heart, then, already so dulled towards her suffering offspring? Could I doubt the selfish nature of her anxieties? What infernal change had come over her? Why did she not instantly order back her carriage, undress, and betake herself to the only place that then became her—the bedside of her child! But it was otherwise. A few minutes after I had quitted, she stepped into her carriage, and drove into the Park. At my suggestion the elder child, Arthur, was sent off immediately to Mrs Ogilvie's, who resided somewhere in the neighbourhood of Chelsea; and I continued in daily attendance upon little George for about a week, during which time the symptoms were of the milder description, and I anticipated the speedy recovery of my little patient. Mrs St Helen, whenever I was present, evidently—at least I was uncharitable enough to admit the idea—*acted* the fond mother, *appearing* deeply interested in the progress of her child through his little perils. I had reason to believe, from or

little circumstances that fell under my observation, that she did not withdraw from the world of pleasure. The constant attendants upon little George were—not his mother—but Miss Churchill and his nursery-maid Jones, both of them most anxious and affectionate nurses,—as, indeed, I heard Mrs St Helen herself, in the blindest way, acknowledge. Well, indeed, she might, having thus devolved the chiefest of her maternal duties upon the companion she had invited to partake of her pleasures only.

I think it was about ten days after I had first been called in to attend upon little St Helen, that I was suddenly summoned, about eight o'clock in the evening, to ——— Street, with the intelligence that he had become very suddenly worse, and that Miss Churchill was much alarmed. Thither I repaired as quickly as possible, and found that appearances justified her apprehensions. There was every symptom of the accession of the malignant form of measles. He had just had a fit of spasms, and was now breathing hard and quickly, and scorched up with fever. The symptoms were certainly serious.

“You must not, however, be too much alarmed, Mrs St Helen,” said I, hastily turning round—forgetting, at the moment, that she, the most interested, was not present. The child had been going on as well as usual,—rapidly recovering, in fact, till six o'clock that evening; about which time Mrs St Helen, after making particular enquiries about the child, went off to dinner at Lady ———’s, where she had ordered the carriage to call for her about nine, and convey her to the opera. In their fright, Miss Churchill and the servants forgot all this, and instinctively sent off for me. After giving such directions

as appeared proper, I quitted the room, beckoning out for a moment Miss Churchill.

"Dear, sweet little love! I'm afraid he's *very* ill," she exclaimed, much agitated, and bursting into tears, as she stepped with me for a moment into another room. I acknowledged to her that I considered the child to be in dangerous circumstances: "Have you sent after Mrs St Helen? she *ought* to be here."

"Dear! we have been all so flurried—but we'll enquire," she replied, running down stairs before me. "I really don't think she's been sent for—but I will immediately. Let me see—nine o'clock. She'll be at the opera by this time.

"Then I will drive thither immediately, as my carriage is here, and bring her back with me. It will not do to alarm her too suddenly, and in such a place. Let me see: on which side of the house is her box?"

"Number —, on the left hand side of the stage. I think, at least, that you will find her in that box, which is the Duchess of —'s, and she called here to-day to offer it to Mrs St Helen." I drove off immediately, and had a twofold object in doing so—to acquaint her as soon as possible with an event of such serious importance as the dangerous illness of her child, and to endeavour, in doing so, to startle her out of the infatuation into which I feared she had fallen—to remind her again of the high and holy duties she was beginning to disregard. The sight of her dying child would rouse, I thought, the smothered feelings of the mother, and those would soon excite an agonizing recollection of her distant husband. On arriving at the opera-house, I made my way, in my hurry, to the wrong side. I went into one or two empty

boxes before I discovered my mistake; and when at length I perceived it, I determined to stay for a few moments where I was, and endeavour to see what was going on in the Duchess of ——'s box. There sate, sure enough, in the corner of the box, her face directed towards the stage, Mrs St Helen, dressed with her usual elegance, and looking extremely beautiful. Her left hand slowly moved about her fan, and she was evidently occasionally conversing with some one standing far back in the box. I contemplated her with real anguish, when I thought of her husband—if, indeed, *she were not now a widow*—and of, perhaps, her dying child. My heart almost failed me, and I began to regret having undertaken the painful duty which had brought me where I was. I stretched myself as far forward as I could, to discover, if possible, who was in the box with her, but in vain. Whoever it was that she was talking to—her fan now and then fluttering hurriedly—he, or she, kept as far out of sight as possible. Just as I was quitting my post of observation, however, a sudden motion of a red arm, displaying the feather of an officer's cap, satisfied me that her companion was the execrable Alverley. I now felt an additional repugnance to go through with what I had undertaken; but I hurried round to the other side of the house, and soon stood at the door of the Duchess's box. I knocked, and it was immediately opened by—Captain Alverley.

“Is Mrs St Helen here?” I whispered. He bowed stiffly, and admitted me. Mrs St Helen, on seeing me, reddened violently. Rising from her seat, and approaching me, she suddenly grew pale, for she could not but perceive that my features were somewhat discomposed.

"Good God! Doctor, what brings you here?" she enquired, with increasing trepidation.

"Permit me to ask, sir," said Captain Alverley, interposing with an air of haughty curiosity, "whether any thing has happened to justify the alarm which Mrs St Helen"——

"I don't wish you to be frightened," said I, addressing her, without noticing her companion, or what he had said—I could not overcome my repugnance to him—"but I think you had better return home with me; my carriage is waiting for you."

"O my child! my child!" she exclaimed faintly, sinking into her seat again; "*what* has happened, for God's sake?"

"He is rather worse—suddenly worse—but I think he was better again before I left." She looked eagerly at me, while her countenance seemed blanched to the hue of the white dress she wore. She began to breathe shortly and hurriedly; and I was glad that the loud and merry music which was playing, would, in some measure, drown the shriek I every moment expected her to utter. I succeeded, however, with Captain Alverley's assistance, in conveying her to my carriage, which I ordered on to —— Street as fast as possible, for Mrs St Helen's excitement threatened to become violent. She sobbed hysterically. "What a cruel, cruel wretch, I have been," she murmured, in broken accents, "to be at the—the opera—when my darling is—dying!"

"Come, come, Mrs St Helen, it is useless to afflict yourself with vain reproaches. You thought, as we all thought, that he was recovering fast, when you set off."

"Oh, but I should never—never have left his bedside! Oh, if I should lose him! I shall never be able to look my"— Thus she proceeded, till overcome with exhaustion, she leaned back, sobbing heavily. As we entered the street in which she lived, she whispered, with evidently a great effort to overcome her agitation, "Dearest Doctor—I see—I know what you must think—but I assure you—I—I—Captain Alverley had but that moment come into the box, quite unexpectedly to me, and I was extremely vexed and annoyed."

I was glad that the carriage stopping spared me the pain of replying to her. Miss Churchill came running to the carriage, as soon as the hall door had been opened—and almost received Mrs St Helen into her arms—for she could hardly stand, her agitation became so suddenly increased.

"Emma—Emma! I do assure you he is better—much—a great deal better!" said Miss Churchill, hurrying her along the hall.

"O Jane—I shall die!—I am very ill! I cannot bear it—can you forgive me?"

"Hush! hush! what nonsense you are talking—you rave!" exclaimed Miss Churchill, as we forced Mrs St Helen into the dining-room, where it was some time before she was restored to any thing like a calmness. Mr —, the well-known apothecary, coming at length into the room, to take his departure, strenuously assured us that the child was very greatly relieved, and that he did not now apprehend danger. This I was happy in being able to corroborate, after having stepped up stairs to satisfy my own anxiety; and I left her for the night, hoping but faintly, that a great effort had been made to

snap asunder the infernal bands in which Satan, in the shape of Alverley, had bound her. It seemed, however, as though my hopes were justified ; for morning, noon, and night beheld Mrs St Helen at her child's bedside—his zealous, watchful, and loving attendant—for upwards of a week. She gave him all his medicine ; with her own hands rendered him all the little services his situation required ; ordered a peremptory “ not at home ” to be answered to all comers except Mrs Ogilvie ; and doubtless banished from her busied bosom all thoughts of Captain Alverley !

The morning after I had brought her home, as I have described, from the opera, on stepping into my carriage I saw some paper lying between the cushions of the seat. Supposing it to be some memorandum or other of my own, I took it up, and with unutterable feelings read the following, hastily written in pencil :—

“ Will you, angel ! condemn me to a distant admiration of your solitary beauty ? I am here fretting in old ——'s box ; for mercy's sake rescue me. Only look down and nod, when you have read this, at ——'s box—I shall understand—and rely upon it, will not abuse your kindness.” * * * *

I tore it with fury into a hundred fragments, and then, recollecting myself, regretted that I had not enclosed it to Mrs St Helen in an envelope, with “ my compliments,” so that she might be sensible of the extent to which I was aware of her guilty secrets. Could there be now any doubt in my mind of the nature of the attentions this villain was paying Mrs St Helen, and which she

permitted? On reading this infernal missive, she must have "*looked and nodded*," and so summoned the fiend to her side. And now I recollected the falsehood she had had presence of mind enough, in the midst of all her agitation, to invent, in order to explain away his being with her—that it was "unexpected" to her, and "vexed and annoyed" her. I long debated with myself whether I should communicate to her the nature of the discovery I had made; but at length, for many reasons, thought it better to take no notice of it. I looked at her with totally different feelings to those with which I had ever before regarded her. I felt as if her presence polluted the chamber of suffering innocence. Her uncommon beauty had thenceforth no attractions for my eye; I felt no gratification in her gentle and winning manners. I did not regret the arrival of the day fixed for both the children, accompanied by herself, to go to the sea-side; it would relieve me from the presence of one whose perfidious conduct daily excited my indignation and disgust.

She returned from the sea-side, I understood, as soon as she had seen her children settled; I say understood, for I had no direct knowledge of the fact. She gave me no intimation either of the safe arrival of her children at the sea-side, or of her own return, or how they were going on. On our casually meeting in Oxford Street she certainly nodded, as our carriages met, but it was not the cordial recognition which I had been accustomed to receive from her. I saw that she did not look in good health—her face seemed clouded with anxiety. As, however, she had vouchsafed me no intimation of her return to town beyond the sudden and casual recognition just mentioned, of course I abstained from calling upon

her. I wondered whether it had ever occurred to her as being possible that the note received from Alverley had been dropped in my carriage, and so come under my notice? She might have recollected that she did not destroy it, but rather, perhaps, determined *not* to destroy it; she might have asked Captain Alverley if he had seen it—they might have searched the opera box—and then Mrs St Helen's guilty soul might have alarmed and worried her with the possibility that such a document might have found its way into my hands;—*and if it had*, could I then do nothing to extricate her from the perilous circumstances in which I conceived her to be placed? What right had I to interfere, however keen my suspicions, however sincere my attachment to her—as she was—and to her husband? But might I not endeavour to communicate with General or Mrs Ogilvie on the subject? Yet I knew nothing whatever of him, and her I had seen but seldom, and only at Mrs St Helen's; and besides, from the evident recrimination that I had interrupted between the sisters-in-law on a former occasion, it was plain that Mrs Ogilvie must be aware of the light conduct of Mrs St Helen—probably she knew and feared far more than I—and so my communication would not appear incredible. Still it might be taken ill—and I resolved not to attempt so dangerous an experiment.

As for anonymous letters, that odious system was my abhorrence. Suppose I were to write directly to Mrs St Helen, braving all chances, and faithfully expostulating with her on the dreadful course upon which she was too evidently bent?—but with what benefit had my former attempts been attended? Suppose she should

return my letter with indignation, or even, in a fever of fury, lay it before Captain Alverley? So, seeing no possible way of interfering successfully between the victim and the destroyer, I withdrew from the painful spectacle, and endeavoured to discharge it from my thoughts. Still, however, in my intercourse with society, I was from time to time pained by hearing rumours of the most distressing description concerning the degree of intimacy subsisting between Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen. Scandal was indeed busy with their names—which at length found their way into the papers of the day. Could, for instance, the following be mistaken?—"The *eccentric* conduct of the lovely wife of a very gallant officer is beginning to attract much notice in the *beau monde*. It is rumoured to have been such as to call forth an intimation from a *very high quarter*," &c. &c.; while in one or two less scrupulous newspapers her name, connected with that of Captain Alverley, was mentioned in the coarsest and most disgusting terms.

Alas, poor Colonel St Helen!—if indeed, the chances of war had yet spared you,—was this the fond and lovely wife you left in such an agony of grief—the mother of your children—she to whom you had confided so much—from whom you were expecting so enthusiastic a welcome after all your brave, and dangerous, and glorious toils? Better would it be for you to fall gloriously before yon grisly array of muskets—amidst the bellowing of your country's cannon—than survive to meet the dismal scenes which seem preparing for you!

Alas, that I should have to record it!—Mrs St Helen at length grew so reckless—the consequence of her in-

famous conduct became so evident—that even some of the less fastidious of the circles in which she moved, found it necessary to exclude her. Public propriety could not be so outraged with impunity.

It was a lovely Sunday morning in May 18—, on which, returning from an early visit to a patient in the neighbourhood of Kensington, I ordered the coachman to walk his horses, that I might enjoy the balmy freshness of every thing around, and point out to my little son, who had accompanied me for the drive's sake, the beauty of Hyde Park, at that point leading off to Kensington Gardens. I could almost have imagined myself fifty miles off in the country. The sun shone serenely out of the blue expanse above upon the bright green shrubs and trees, yet cool and fresh with the morning dew. With the exception of one gentleman who had cantered past us a few minutes before, and a tidy old country-looking dame sitting on one of the benches to rest herself from a long walk to town, we encountered no one. My little chatterer was making some sagacious observations upon the height and number of the trees in Kensington Gardens, when a rumbling heavy noise indicated the approach of a vehicle at a rapid rate. It proved to be a chariot-and-four, coming towards us in the direction of Cumberland Gate—tearing along as fast as the postilions could urge their horses. The side-blinds were drawn down, but those in front were up, and enabled me to see—Mrs St Helen and Captain Alverley! She was evidently violently agitated, her white dress seemed to have been put on in haste and disorder, her hair was dishevelled—she was wringing her hands, and weeping

passionately. He was so absorbed with his attempts to pacify her, as not to have observed me. I drew my breath with difficulty for some moments, the shock of such a dreadful apparition had been so sudden. It seemed as though I had met Satan hurrying away with a fallen angel!

So, then, this was her ELOPEMENT that I had been fated to see! Yes, the final step had been taken which separated that miserable and guilty being for ever from all that was honourable, virtuous, precious in life; which plunged her into infamy irretrievable;—and her husband—her children!—Fiend thou *hadst* triumphed!

My exhilaration of spirits, occasioned by the beauty and calmness of the morning, instantly disappeared. It seemed as though a cloud darkened the heavens, and filled my soul with oppressive gloom. “Papa!” exclaimed my little son, rousing me from the reverie into which I had fallen—“what are you thinking about? Are you sorry for that lady and gentleman? I wonder who they are? Why was she crying? Is she ill, do you think?” His questions at length attracted my attention; but I could not answer him, for he reminded me of little Arthur St Helen, who was just about his age! Poor children! Innocent offspring of an infamous mother, what is to become of you? What direful associations will ever hereafter hang around the name you bear!

About eleven o’clock I drove through —— Street, and on approaching Mrs St Helen’s house perceived indications, even in the street, of something unusual having happened. On drawing up at the door,—for I

determined to call, if only to mention what I had seen,—I saw that there were several persons in the drawing-room, evidently agitated. The servant who opened the door seemed quite bewildered. I was requested to walk up stairs as soon as he had taken up my name, and soon found myself in the drawing-room, in the presence of Miss Churchill, General and Mrs Ogilvie, the Earl and Countess of Hetheringham, and several other relatives and connexions of Colonel and Mrs St Helen. They were all evidently labouring under great excitement. Mrs Ogilvie was perfectly frantic, walking to and fro, and wringing her hands, the picture of despair. I addressed myself first to Miss Churchill, who stood nearest me. She took my hand, but suddenly quitted it, overcome with her feelings, and turned away.

“My dear Countess,” said I, approaching the Countess of Hetheringham, who was sitting on the sofa, conversing with a lady, her handkerchief now and then raised towards her eyes, but her manner being still somewhat stately and composed—“I fear I can guess what has happened!” taking a chair opposite to her.

“*Eloped*, Doctor! she has, positively!—We are all thunderstruck,” she answered in a low tone, but with her usual deliberation. “We were preparing to go to church when the painful news reached us. We came off hither, and have been here ever since. I have not told any of my daughters.”

“Her companion, I suppose”—

“Of course that wretch Captain Alverley. It is a pity he is to succeed to the title and estates. The Earl, by the way, talks of calling him out, and so forth. I’ll

take care he does no such thing, however. Don't you think General Ogilvie should do so, if any one?"

"How and when did she go?" I enquired, affecting not to hear her last observations. "I called to say that I suspected what has happened, since I met them this morning early in the Park."——

"Herbert!" exclaimed the Countess, in a less drawling tone than usual, addressing the Earl of Hetheringham, who was conversing with General Ogilvie and another gentleman in a low earnest tone at the further end of the room—"Doctor —— says that he met the fugitives this morning in the Park."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Earl, earnestly, as they all three approached us. I told them what I had seen—and they listened in silence.

"Do you think we could mention the affair at the Horse-Guards?" enquired the Earl, turning to General Ogilvie. "I have a great mind to call on the Commander-in-Chief to-morrow, and represent the infamous conduct of his *aide-de-camp* towards a distinguished brother officer!" The General and his companion shook their heads, and the three presently walked away again to a distant part of the drawing-room, where they appeared to resume the conversation which the Countess's summons had interrupted.

"To tell you the truth, Doctor," she continued, "I am not much surprised at her turning out in this way"——

"Heavens, Countess! you astonish me"——

"Her father, you know," continued the frigid Countess, "was a very so-so kind of character; and gave her

no sort of proper education. I have had *my* daughters educated in the strictest possible way—quite under my own eye! Mrs St Helen I tried to train when she was with us for a short time—but it was useless. I soon saw it was in vain; and she did my daughters no good while she was with them, I assure you.”

“Why, surely, Countess, you never saw any thing improper in her conduct while she was under your care?”

“Oh, why, yes—I mean, not perhaps, exactly; but, to be sure, the girl’s head was quite turned with the nonsense the men talked to her, as they do to every new girl—they thought her pretty!” She paused, but I only bowed.

“Tis a sad thing for *us*, Doctor, is it not?” resumed the Countess. “The papers will take care to get hold of it, because of her relationship to *us*—it is really most unpleasant!” At this moment, a servant entered—and whispered to Miss Churchill—and she, followed by Mrs Ogilvie, presently quitted the room. “I dare say that is some message about the children,” said the Countess, in the same passionless tone and manner she had hitherto preserved—how I pity *them*, by the way! Poor things, it will be always flung in their teeth; they’ll feel the greatest difficulty in settling in life—I quite feel for them!” sighing gently. “I suppose, by the way, the Colonel will find no difficulty, if he should live to return to England, in obtaining a divorce? But then the exposure is so great!” How long the Countess would have gone on in this strain, I know not; I was heartily tired of it—it seemed, so to speak, utterly *out of tune*; so I rose and bowed, saying I wished to see Mrs Ogilvie

before I left, as she and Miss Churchill seemed extremely excited and hysterical.

"You will not mention this affair more than you can help, Doctor!" said the Countess with great dignity.

"Rely on my prudence," I replied carelessly, and quitted the room, perfectly wearied out and disgusted with the tone and spirit in which such a dreadful matter was discussed by one who ought to have felt a most painful interest in it. I directed a servant to show me to the room whither Mrs Ogilvie and Miss Churchill had gone; and was, within a few moments, ushered into the boudoir. How my heart ached, as I hastily cast my eye over the numerous little elegancies scattered tastefully about the room; and especially when it fell upon a beautiful full-length crayon sketch of Mrs St Helen, which hung upon the wall!

"Oh, wretch!" exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie, observing my eye fixed upon it; and walking hastily up to it, she stood for a few moments with her arms stretched out towards it; and then, burying her face in her hands, wept as if her heart would break. I rose and turned the picture with its face to the wall.

"My brother! my brave and noble-hearted brother!" sobbed Mrs Ogilvie, and sunk, overpowered with her feelings, into a seat.

"Where is my mamma?" kept continually enquiring little Arthur St Helen, whom Miss Churchill was clasping affectionately in her arms, while her tears fell like rain upon his little head. He was the image of his beautiful—fallen mother.

"She's gone, gone, my love! You will never see her again!" she murmured.

"But I'll go and fetch her, if you will only tell me where she is." Miss Churchill wept, but made no reply.

"Why do you turn mamma's picture round in that way?" he enquired, looking at me with a haughty air—one that most strongly reminded me of his guilty mother. "I love my mamma very dearly, and you shall not do so!" Miss Churchill kissed him with passionate fervour, but made him no reply. Mrs Ogilvie rose, and beckoning me to follow her, quitted the boudoir, and stepped into the room adjoining. "Oh, Doctor! of all the dreadful scenes you have ever seen, can any thing equal this? I would rather—indeed I would—have followed both my brother and his wife to the grave than lived to see this day!—My dear—brave—fond—generous—betrayed brother—read it! read it, if you can! It has quite broken my heart!" and hastily snatching a letter from her bosom, she thrust it into my hands, telling me that Mrs St Helen had received it only late last night, and in her hurried flight, which it had perhaps occasioned, had left it upon the floor of her dressing-room. The letter was from Colonel St Helen to Mrs St Helen; and was quite damp—it might be with the tears of agony that had fallen from those who had read it. It was as follows:—

"Malta, April 10th, 18—.

"My sweet Emma! Still two thousand envious miles are between us! Oh that I had an angel's wing to fly to you in a moment! But alas, that is what I have been wishing a thousand and a thousand times since I left you—four long years ago. My lovely Emma!

idol of my heart, and shall we indeed be ere long reunited? Shall I again clasp my dear beautiful Emma in my arms—never, never again to be separated? Dearest! a thousand times the wealth of the Indies shall not tempt me again to quit you! * * * I come home somewhat earlier than my regiment, being a little—mind, love! *only* a little of an invalid. Don't be alarmed, my sweet Emma, for I assure you, upon my honour, that I am quite recovered. The fact is, that I received, in the battle of A——, an ugly wound in my left arm from a musket-ball, which confined me to a tent and to my bed for nearly six weeks; and Lord ——, in the kindest way, wrote to me to insist upon my returning to England for a year, in order to recruit. I came overland, and am rather fatigued with my journey. An important matter keeps me at Malta for a week; but in the very next ship I start for merry old England! * * And how have you been, my dearest Emma? And how are Arthur and George? Why do you say so little about them? and about yourself? But I suppose you have got the common notion—that your letters are opened by others than those they are directed to!—How I have guessed what might be the features and expression of my little boys! I have never seen George!—is he really like me?—By the way, I have brought you some beautiful diamonds! I have almost beggared myself (till I arrive in England) to obtain them for my Emma. How I shall delight to see them upon you!

“ Unless something extraordinary should happen, you will see me in about a week after you get this letter—it *may* be only a day or two after; and, my own Emma, I most particularly wish that you will be alone during the

week immediately following your receipt of this letter—for I must have you all to myself, when we meet—as the Scripture has it, ‘with our joy a stranger intermeddleth not.’ God bless you, my dearest, dearest Emma! and kiss the dear boys heartily for me! Your fond—
floating husband,

“ARTHUR ST HELEN.”

I returned this letter to Mrs Ogilvie in silence, who, with a heavy sigh, replaced it in her bosom.

“She must have read it,” said I, after a pause.

“Yes,” she replied, with a shudder of disgust and horror, “and if she felt herself guilty, I wonder she survived it!” * * *

“What arrangements have you made with respect to the children?” I enquired.

She replied, “that she had already given directions for their removal to her house, where she should keep them till her brother’s return;” trembling as she uttered the last word or two. * * *

“I suppose you have heard some of the many painful rumours as to the conduct of Mrs St Helen latterly?” said I, in a low tone.

“Yes—oh yes—infamous woman! But the General and I have been travelling on the Continent during the last six months, or he would have taken these poor children away from her contaminating presence, even by force, if necessary. I did frequently expostulate with her in the most urgent manner, but latterly she grew very haughty, and replied to me with great rudeness, even”——

“Alas! I fear her heart has been long corr

She shook her head and sobbed.—I mentioned the slip of paper I had picked up in my carriage.

“Oh, many, many worse things than that have come to our knowledge since we returned from the Continent! Her disgraceful conduct drove Miss Churchill from —— Street several months ago. Oh, the scenes even she has been compelled to witness! Is there *no* punishment for this vile—this abominable Alverley!”

“Can it be true, Mrs Ogilvie, that the villain has even had the miserable meanness to borrow considerable sums of money from Mrs St Helen?”

“That also I have heard; that she has wasted the property of my poor betrayed brother, and their children, in order to supply his necessities at the gaming-table; but I cannot go on! I shall go distracted!”

I ascertained that very late in the preceding night, or rather at an early hour of the morning, Mrs St Helen had returned from Vauxhall, accompanied as usual by Captain Alverley; and immediately upon her entering the house, the above letter from Colonel St Helen was placed in her hands. Her guilty soul was thunderstruck at the sight of her husband's handwriting. Captain Alverley, who entered with her, opened and read the letter; and would have taken it away with him to destroy it, had she not insisted so vehemently upon reading it, that he was forced to comply. She swooned before she had read half of the letter. All I could learn of what happened subsequently was, that Captain Alverley left about three o'clock, and returned in little more than an hour's time; that a travelling carriage-and-four drew up at the door about five o'clock; but such was her agitation and illness, that it was not till nearly half-past seven o'clock

that Captain Alverley succeeded, after a vain attempt to induce her maid to accompany them, in carrying Mrs St Helen into the carriage, almost in a state of insensibility. He gave the sullen incredulous servants to understand that their mistress had been summoned off to meet Colonel St Helen! She had not ventured into the room where her children were asleep, in blessed unconsciousness of the fearful scenes that were going forward.

In most of the Monday morning's newspapers appeared the ordinary kind of paragraph announcing the "Elopement in fashionable life"—some of them mentioning the names of the parties by initials. One of them alluded to Mrs St Helen's connexion with the family of the Earl of Hetheringham, whom, it stated, the "afflicting event had thrown into the deepest distress," &c.—an intimation so intolerably offensive to the pure, fastidious feelings of the Countess, that the day after there appeared the following paragraph. I give verbatim the heartless disclaimer, the tone and style of which may perhaps serve to indicate the distinguished quarter whence it emanated.

"We have been requested, on the very highest authority, to take the earliest possible opportunity of correcting an unintentional and most injurious misstatement that appeared in our yesterday's paper concerning the truly unfortunate and most distressing affair in — Street, and one that is calculated to wound the feelings of a family of very high distinction. It is not true, but quite contrary to the fact, that the lady, Mrs ***** , was educated in the family of the Earl of Hetheringham. She is certainly a remote connexion of the Earl's, and when extremely young, was received on a visit into his

lordship's house till some family arrangements had been completed; but we have been given to understand that the lady in question and the noble family alluded to have been long alienated, particularly the female branches." In another part of the same paper appeared the intelligence that "Mrs St —— was a lady of great personal beauty and accomplishments, and had left a family of six children." Another newspaper informed its readers that "the gallant companion of a certain lovely fugitive was the heir-presumptive of a peerage and a splendid fortune." A third, "that the late elopement was likely to afford lucrative employment to the gentlemen of the long robe." A fourth, "that the husband of a lady, whose recent, &c. was an officer of distinction, had long discarded her, owing to her light conduct, and was now taking steps to procure a divorce," &c. &c. &c. With such matters was—and generally is—titillated the prurient curiosity of fashionable society for a moment only—probably, after a brief interval, its attention being again excited by intimations that "the lady whose elopement lately occasioned much stir in the fashionable circles," had destroyed herself, or betaken herself to most reckless and dishonourable courses, &c.; and that Captain A—— "was, they understood, about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Miss ——," &c. &c. This, I say, is not an unfrequent case; but not such was the course of events consequent upon the enormous wickedness of Mrs St Helen.

During Monday the deserted little St Helens were removed, accompanied by Miss Churchill, to the residence of Mrs Ogilvie, the General continuing in —— Street to receive Colonel St Helen when he should

arrive, and—in what way he best might—break to him the disastrous intelligence of his wife's infidelity and flight. As it was uncertain when and from what quarter Colonel St Helen would reach the metropolis, it was of course impossible to anticipate or prevent his arrival at —— Street, even had such a measure been desirable. Up to Thursday he had not made his dreaded appearance. On the evening of that day, however, a post-chaise-and-four, covered with dust, rattled rapidly round the corner of —— Square, and in a few moments the reeking horses stood panting at the door of Colonel St Helen's. Before either of the postilions could dismount, or the servant open the hall-door, or General Ogilvie, who was sitting in the dining-room make his appearance, the chaise-door was opened from within, the steps thrust down, and forth sprung a gentleman in dusty travelling costume—his left arm in a sling—and rushed up to the door of the house. While his impatient hand was thundering with the knocker, the door was opened.

"Is Mrs St Helen"—he commenced, in eager and joyful accents, which, however, suddenly ceased at sight of the servant standing, pale as death, trembling and silent.

"Why—what's the matter?" stammered Colonel St Helen—for he, of course, it was. "Ah, Ogilvie!" rushing towards the General, who, having paused for an instant before presenting himself, now quitted the dining-room, and hurried up to the startled Colonel.

"My dear St Helen!" commenced the General, his agitation apparent. A mighty sigh burst from the swelling bosom of Colonel St Helen as he suffered himself to be drawn into the dining-room.

"What's all this!" he enquired in a hoarse, hard

whisper, as General Ogilvie shut the door. He was for a moment tongue-tied at sight of the long-dreaded apparition which now so suddenly stood before him. The Colonel's face became overspread with a deadly hue as he made the enquiry, and his right hand still locked that of General Ogilvie in its rigid grasp.

"St Helen, you must bear it like a man and a soldier," at length commenced the General, recovering himself. "The chances of war, you know"——

"Is she dead?" gasped the Colonel, without moving from where he stood, or relaxing his hold of General Ogilvie's hand.

"No," replied the General, turning as pale as his companion.

"Then—what—in the name of God!—tell me"——whispered Colonel St Helen, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, while the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. At a word spoken in a low tone by General Ogilvie the Colonel started as if he had been stabbed, and then lay extended upon the floor. The General sprung to the bell, and shouted violently for assistance. The room was instantly almost filled with servants. One of them was despatched for me, and another for the nearest surgeon. The latter arrived in a very few minutes, and I was in attendance within little less than a quarter of an hour, for the man, knowing my carriage, stopped it as I was entering the street in which I lived. I found Colonel St Helen propped up in bed in the arms of General Ogilvie—his coat and waistcoat and neck-handkerchief only had been removed, and his shirt-collar thrown open. The heavy snorting sound that met my ears prepared me for the worst. Colonel St

Helen was in a fit of apoplexy. Within a minute or two after my entrance the jugular vein was opened—that in the arm had given no relief. Oh, that his infamous wife could have been by my side as I gazed upon the lamentable object before me! Here, woman,—behold your handiwork!

He had been ever foremost in fight; he had braved death in a thousand forms; the flag of victory had often waved gloriously over him; he had quitted the field with honourable wounds; his grateful country welcomed her gallant disabled son; his affectionate wife, he thought, stretched forth her eager arms to receive him; after months of agony, on the wings of love he had flown seven thousand long miles to be—blasted, as here he lay before me!

Sad sights have I seen in my time, but when one so sad as this? My swelling heart overpowers me! Poor Colonel, what can *my* art do for thee?

And thou, Alverley, come hither *thou* for a moment, slayer of the peace and honour of thy brave brother soldier! Quit for a moment the cockatrice, thy companion, to look upon this victim of your united treachery! Oh, out upon thee! thy presence corrupts the air! *Down, down to hell!* But no!—I rave—society will presently welcome you again, gay Alverley! to her harlot bosom!

Though a large opening had been made in the jugular vein, through which the blood was flowing copiously, no impression whatever seemed made, or likely to be made, upon the violence of the attack. I therefore recommended opening the turgid temporal artery—which was done—and large blisters to be applied to the nape of the neck and to the extremities—the usual means re-

sorted to in violent apoplectic seizures. I waited for upwards of an hour, and was then obliged to leave my unhappy, but perhaps happily unconscious patient, in apparently the same state as that in which I had found him. I paid him another visit early in the morning—still he lay in extreme danger, having been bled twice during the night, but without any sensible effect. I willingly acceded to the General's desire for an immediate consultation with Sir ———, which accordingly took place about two o'clock. The result was that we expressed a strong opinion that, unless a decided change took place within an hour or two, the attack would prove fatal. Why should I wish it—I thought—otherwise? What hopeless anguish would be spared him were he never to awake to a consciousness of the tremendous calamity that had befallen him! What could life henceforth be to *him*? How could his grievous wounds be healed, or even stanchd? How could his wrongs be repaired, mitigated, or concealed? What bitter agony would the sight of his children ever force into his heart! I thought of all this, and for a moment did not feel anxious that success should attend our strenuous efforts to save him. They succeeded, however, and in three or four days' time it seemed probable that the unhappy sufferer would live to become acquainted with the full extent of his misery—to drain perhaps the cup of sorrow to the dregs. I was in the room when his eyes gave almost their first look of returning consciousness. Oh, dreadful contrast to the gay and happy man I last saw him before his departure for India! His hair was now somewhat of an iron-grey hue—his complexion had become deeply bronzed by his constant exposure to the

rays of an Indian sun. Despite, however, his present extreme exhaustion, and the sunken sallowness of his countenance, it was impossible not to perceive its superior air—the lineaments of that bold and resolute character for which Colonel St Helen had ever been distinguished. But where was the wonted fire of those dark eyes that were now directed towards me drowsily and unconsciously? Was he then aware of the cause of his illness, or was the frightful truth breaking bitterly and slowly upon his reviving faculties? God grant that the latter might prove to be the case, or the consequences might be disastrous indeed!

For nearly a fortnight he lay in a kind of lethargy, never once speaking, or apparently taking any notice of what was passing about him. Innumerable calls were made at his house, and enquiries concerning his health by a large circle of attached and sympathizing friends. His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief sent almost daily to know how he was going on. As soon as I thought it advisable, I intimated my anxious wish that he should have the advantage of a change of scene; and as soon as he was able to be removed, travel by easy stages to Cheltenham. He simply shook his head, sorrowfully, at the same time raising his hand as if deprecating the mention of it. Of course I desisted. The next time I called his female attendant met me on the stairs, and gave me to understand that he had begged the proposal might not be renewed, as he was determined not to quit — Street. Before leaving him that day, General Ogilvie followed me, and told me that the Colonel, who had not once made any allusion to what had taken place, suddenly enquired, in the course of the morning, in a faint tone,

where his children were ; and on being informed, expressed a wish to see them. After some hesitation I consented to their being brought the next day, for a few minutes only—the General having assured me that I could not overrate the fortitude of his suffering relative. “Depend upon it he will bear the sight of them,” said the General, “better than you imagine, though certainly his nerves must have been much shaken. How shall we arrange it? I should very much wish you to be present, Doctor, if you could contrive it.” I promised not only to be present, but that, as I could easily arrange it, I would myself call and bring Mrs Ogilvie and the children ; and so it was decided. The next afternoon, therefore, about three o’clock, on my return from visiting a patient in the neighbourhood of General Ogilvie’s residence, I called there, but found Mrs Ogilvie on the point of going out, not having received any intimation of our arrangement. She instantly, however, agreed to accompany me. “And how are your little nephews?” I enquired.

“Oh, they are very well,” she replied, with a sigh ; “a child’s grief is not very deep or lasting ; Arthur was as merry the next morning after leaving —— Street, as if nothing had happened ! Now and then, however, he suddenly asks me where his mamma is, and when he shall go to see her, or when she will come here ! But when he sees me sometimes turn aside my head, to hide the tears that force themselves into my eyes, the poor child thinks I am angry with him, and kisses me, throwing his arms round my neck, and saying he will never ask to see his mamma again. He soon, however, forgets his promise,” added Mrs Ogilvie with emotion.

"Here they are at present, as merry as they can be," she continued, opening the folding doors, and walking into a room that looked upon a pleasant garden. "Alas that they should ever hear of what has caused all our sorrow!"

The two little boys were romping about upon the grass-plot in high glee, running after and rolling over one another. How like the elder one was to his wretched, degraded, accursed mother! The same bright blue eye, the same beautifully formed chin and mouth!—I dreaded the effect of his standing suddenly before his father!—The younger child, George, as lively as a cricket, and as brown as a berry, bore some little general resemblance to his father.

Oh, how could your mother look upon your little faces, and listen to your prattle, and feel your tiny arms embracing her, and forget that she had borne you! That you were the fruit of her womb! That your little lips had a thousand times drawn nurture from her bosom! Forget all the myriad of delicious agonies and ecstasies of a mother! Her generous, confiding, absent husband!—How could she, knowing all this, recollecting all this, deliberately surrender herself to destruction, and prefer the blighting companionship of a fiend—an adulterer!

"Now, Arthur and George," said Mrs Ogilvie, as we approached them in the garden—"you must be good children, and go and get dressed, and I will take you both out"—

"What! a drive in the carriage? I love the ponies!" replied Arthur, eagerly.

"Yes, my love, we are going to take you to see papa."

"No, no, I shall not go there! I don't like my papa! He has taken my mamma away!"

"No, child, do not talk such nonsense; papa has done no such thing. Poor papa is very ill," replied Mrs Ogilvie, tremulously, "and wishes to see his little boys."

"I don't know my papa," said the child, pouting, and sidling away from us. "He's a very, very great way off—but if you'll let *mamma* go with us, then I don't care."

"Your papa," said I, observing Mrs Ogilvie's emotion, "does not know where your mamma is!" The child seemed quite puzzled at all this. "Will you go with us, then?" he enquired, turning to Mrs Ogilvie.

"Yes, love."

"Isn't my papa a very great officer?" he enquired abruptly. "He has killed—oh, such a number of people, I am told! Do you think he will like to see *us*?"

"Yes, indeed, Arthur—and he will love you very dearly!" replied Mrs Ogilvie, with a faltering voice, leading her little nephews into the house. They were not long in being dressed, and we were presently on our way to town. I began to feel rather more apprehensive of the propriety of allowing the interview when I saw how his mother was running in Arthur's head. Suppose he were bluntly to ask his father what had become of her? I whispered my apprehensions to Mrs Ogilvie, and found them shared by her. She had not seen her brother since his return from India, and declared herself perfectly incapable of bearing an interview with him at present, even were he able to receive her. As we turned into ——— Street the children became very restless; and

when we reached the house Arthur looked up at it apprehensively, and refused at first to quit the carriage. We succeeded, however, in inducing him to do so, and in pacifying him, and both the children were conducted into the library, where Mrs Ogilvie undertook to occupy their attention while I repaired to the Colonel's bedside to ascertain how he was. I found him very little changed from what I had seen him on the preceding day, except that there was an evident restlessness and anxiety about the eyes. Probably he was aware that his children had arrived. General Ogilvie, who rarely quitted the chamber of his suffering brother-in-law, sat in his accustomed chair beside him. I sat down in the one usually placed for me; while my finger was on his pulse, and my eye on my watch, the Colonel said, in a low tone—"They are come, are they not?" I told him that they were below.

"Let them be brought up then, if you please—but only one at a time," said he, a faint flush appearing on his cheek. General Ogilvie immediately left the room, but not without first casting an anxious glance at me.

"You are both, I can see, apprehensive on my account," he whispered; "but I am perfectly aware of my situation.—He must not be long in the room, however; for I may not be so strong as I think myself." In a few moments General Ogilvie returned, leading in his little companion, who entered with evident reluctance, looking with some fear towards the bed where his father lay.

"You are a very good child, Arthur," said I, in a soothing tone, holding out my hand to receive him—inwardly cursing at the moment his resemblance to Mrs St Helen, and which just then appeared to me stronger

than ever. "Come and ask your papa how he is!" The child came and stood between my knees. Can I ever forget the looks with which that father and son, on this their bitter meeting, regarded one another? Neither spoke. It would be in vain to attempt describing that of the former; as for little Arthur, his face showed a mingled expression of apprehension and wonder. "Speak to your papa," I whispered, observing him slowly pressing back—"he is very poorly!" He looked at me for a moment, and then faintly exclaimed, gazing at Colonel St Helen—"Papa, I love you!" The poor Colonel turned his head away and closed his eyes. In vain he strove to compress his quivering lip; nature *would* conquer, and the tears soon forced themselves through his closed eyelids. I wish Mrs St Helen could have seen the unutterable anguish visible in his features when he turned again to look upon the little innocent countenance—in form and feature so much resembling *hers*! After gazing thus for some moments in silence upon the child, he whispered, "Kiss me, Arthur!" He did so—bending forward, however, timorously.

"Do you love me?" enquired his father.

"Yes, papa!" The Colonel stretched out his arms to embrace his son, but his left arm instantly fell again powerless beside him. He shook his head, and endeavoured to suppress a heavy sigh.

"Do you recollect me, Arthur?" he enquired. The child looked at me, and made no answer.

"Do you love your little brother George?" asked the Colonel, languidly.

"Yes, very much—I'll go and fetch him, papa—he

will love you too—he is down stairs.” Every fibre of Colonel St Helen’s face quivered with emotion. His eyes overflowed with tears, and he whispered—

“ I feel I cannot bear it ! he had better go.”

“ General,” said I, “ will you take him down stairs ? We fatigue Colonel St Helen !” But he made me no answer. He was looking forcedly away, and his tears fell fast. I therefore rose, and after lifting up the child again to kiss his suffering parent, led him down stairs, thankful that he had not tortured his father by any allusion to his infamous mother. On my return, I found Colonel St Helen much exhausted, and evidently suffering acutely from the distracted feelings excited by his son’s presence.

He recovered, but very slowly, during the ensuing month, from as severe an attack of apoplexy as I had ever witnessed. The grief that was preying upon his heart soon showed itself in the settled gloom with which his emaciated features were laden, and which, coupled with his dangerous illness, and the very violent remedies we were compelled to adopt in order to subdue it, had reduced him almost to a skeleton. He had, indeed, fallen away most surprisingly. A fine muscular man when in health, he looked now as if he had returned from India in a deep decline. He would sit alone, and speechless, for hours : and took even his ordinary nourishment with visible reluctance. When his children entered into his presence—they were brought to him daily—he received them with affection, but his manner oppressed them. Alas ! he had now no smiles with which to welcome and return any of their little overtures towards cheerfulness ; in the midst of any faint attempt at merriment on their

part, he would rise, and suddenly clasp them to his widowed heart in silent agony.

The manner in which, at a former period of his illness, he had rejected the proposal made to him of a change of scene, prevented its being renewed. One morning, however, he suddenly asked General Ogilvie if he could give him a home for a few months; and on being assured of the affectionate welcome with which he would be received, he expressed a desire to quit — Street on the ensuing morning. He forthwith gave directions for his house, with all its furniture, of every description, to be sold; and the clothes, trinkets, and such personal ornaments of Mrs St Helen as were in the house he ordered to be destroyed. He exacted a pledge to this effect from General Ogilvie. On its being given, and the necessary arrangements made for his departure, he took his arm, and—shadow of his former self!—stepped languidly into the General's carriage, drew down the blinds, and quitted — Street for ever. The day after, in passing the house, I saw on great staring bills in the windows and on a board upon the walls—"THIS HOUSE TO BE SOLD." To this day I never glance at such objects without being suddenly and painfully reminded of the events which are detailed in this chapter.

I could gain no intelligence whatever of the destination or movements of Mrs St Helen; it was generally supposed that she had gone, and still remained abroad, in company with Captain Alverley. I expected in each day's paper to hear of her having committed suicide; and for that reason, never omitted to cast my eye over a paragraph headed with "Coroner's Inquest," or "Distressing Suicide." Not so, however; she was reserved

for severer sufferings; a more signal punishment; a more lamentable END! Captain Alverley made his appearance in London about six weeks after the elopement; and in passing along St James's Park he chanced to come upon his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, who was returning on horseback from the Horse-Guards. He drew up, and motioning Captain Alverley, his *aide-de-camp*, to approach, rebuked him sternly and indignantly for the cruel and infamous outrage he had committed, commanding him never again to enter his presence. The Duke rode off with a haughty scowl, leaving Captain Alverley apparently thunderstruck. This incident found its way into the next day's papers; and Captain Alverley, perceiving himself in general bad odour, threw up his commission, and withdrew, it was supposed, to the Continent. The excellent Duke of York, indeed, evinced from the first the greatest sympathy with Colonel St Helen; and as soon as he thought he might safely do so, sent him a letter, by a distinguished general officer, also a friend of the Colonel's, full of the kindest and most condescending expressions, and intimating his wish to see him at the Horse-Guards at the earliest possible opportunity. He added that he was authorized to state that his Majesty had expressed a sincere sympathy for his sufferings, and the highest approbation of his gallant conduct abroad. The Colonel sighed on reading these flattering communications.

"Tell his Royal Highness," said he, "that I am very grateful for his condescension; and the moment I am able I will attend him personally to say as much."

"I was not exactly authorized," said Lord —, "to

mention it to you, but you are to have the —th ; I heard his Royal Highness say as much."

"Pray tell his Royal Highness," replied the Colonel, with a melancholy air, "that I cannot accept it—for I return to India by the next ship!"

"Good God! Colonel St Helen,—return to India?" echoed Lord —, with an air of infinite astonishment.

"*Can I remain in England?*" suddenly enquired the Colonel—with a look that silenced Lord —, at the same time hastily rising and standing for a few moments with his back turned towards him, evidently overpowered with his feelings. Neither spoke for a few moments.

"I cannot tell this to his Royal Highness," said Lord —; "I know he will ask me about every thing that has passed at our interview."

"Then tell him, my Lord, my last words to you were, that my heart is broken, but my will is not. I shall go to India, if I live—and that as soon as possible!"

Lord — saw that he was inflexible, and abstained from further importunities.

Three months had now elapsed from the day on which Colonel St Helen arrived in England to encounter so fell a blight of his fondest hopes, his brightest prospects; and he had made his final and gloomy preparations for returning to India. Notwithstanding the sympathizing and affectionate attachment of General and Mrs Ogilvie, had it not been for the daily sight of his children—those innocent, helpless; deserted beings, whom he was himself even about to desert—he would have lost almost all sympathy with mankind. His heart yearned indeed

towards his little sons—but his resolution had been taken, and was unchangeable, to return to India, and amidst the scenes of direful carnage he had there quitted, to seek, in an honourable death, release from the agonies he suffered. He arranged all his affairs evidently on the basis of his being about to take leave of England for ever. His purposes with reference to his children might have been varied but for the fond and zealous guardians for them he found in General and Mrs Ogilvie. It was not till within a very short period of his departure, that he could bear to ask from the former a detailed account of all that had happened. He heard the name of Alverley mentioned in silence. He merely enquired for a while where he was supposed to be, and never again alluded to him. The name of Mrs St Helen never escaped his lips.

When he presented himself before the Commander-in-Chief, he met with a most gracious reception. His Royal Highness shook him warmly by the hand, and with a quivering lip assured him of his sympathy and personal regard.

“Is your resolution to return to India, Colonel St Helen, unalterable?” enquired the Duke. The Colonel bowed; his air and manner satisfied the Duke of the uselessness of expostulation. No; in vain were the intimations of royalty, the entreaties of friends; in vain the passionate tears and embraces of his sister; in vain the energetic remonstrances of General Ogilvie; in vain were his children flung by his sister into his arms and upon his knees in an ecstasy of grief. His darkening countenance told how vain were all such appeals. His passage was engaged in a ship quitting the Thames in a

few days' time. His servant had already packed up almost all that was to be taken aboard. The dreaded morning arrived; he tenderly embraced his sister and his children before setting off for town; finally, as he had determined, but only for a few hours as they supposed, understanding that he would return in the afternoon to bid them adieu for ever.

"While he and General Ogilvie were waiting in a back room at Messrs —, the army agents, where he wished to make some final pecuniary arrangements, his eye happened to fall upon a paragraph, which he read with almost a suspension of his breath, and a face suddenly flushed with excitement.

"Ogilvie!" said he, turning to his astonished brother-in-law a countenance that had quickly become white as death, and speaking in a totally different voice from any that had been heard from him since his illness, "I have changed my mind. I shall not go to India. At all events, not at present."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the General, evidently, however, confounded with the suddenness of the information as much as at the manner in which it was conveyed: "but, good God, what has happened? what has agitated you?"

"I am not agitated," replied Colonel St Helen, with a violent effort to speak calmly, at the same time rising from his chair, and folding up the newspaper he had been reading. "Can you spare this?" said he to the clerk whom he had summoned into the room. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then you may tell Mr — to give himself, at present, no further trouble about the business I called upon; be so good as to inform him

that I have made some change in my arrangements. Shall we walk home, Ogilvie?" They quitted Messrs ——'s immediately.

"St Helen," said General Ogilvie, as they left, "I protest that I will not return home with you till you have told me frankly what has occasioned this most extraordinary change of manner and purpose"——

"My dear Ogilvie, you shall know all. Read this," said the Colonel, with an excited air, taking out the newspaper; and unfolding it, he pointed out the following paragraph:—

"By the death of the Right Hon. Lord Seckington, the Hon. Captain Alverley, formerly of the —— Guards, succeeds to the title and estates, which are great, as well as to the splendid accumulations of funded property said to have been made by the late Lord S., who has bequeathed every thing to the present Lord Seckington. He is now abroad, but is daily expected in —— Street."

"Well!" exclaimed the General, with a deep sigh, after having read the paragraph twice over, in perturbed silence, returning the paper, "of course it is easy to guess your intentions."

"Intentions!" exclaimed Colonel St Helen, with great vivacity, "this is the first time I have breathed freely since my arrival in England!"

"Do you, then, really think of meeting this man?" enquired the General, gravely, after a pause.

"Meet him? *Do I intend to meet him?*"—Ogilvie, you vex me!" replied Colonel St Helen, briskly and bitterly, at the same time insensibly quickening his pace. He dragged his companion along in silence, at such a rapid rate, that they were almost half through the Park

before either—deeply engaged with his thoughts—had again spoken.

“Let me see—how shall I know when he arrives in London?” said the Colonel, abruptly, as if he had thought aloud.

“Oh, there cannot be much difficulty about that,” replied the General, who had by this time satisfied himself of the hopelessness of attempting to dissuade Colonel St Helen from his evident purpose.—“I will do all that you can possibly desire, since”——

“Dear Ogilvie—my dear good brother,” said the Colonel, with affectionate energy, “do not think I shall permit *you* to be at all involved in this affair. Mischief may come of it—I *intend it shall*—I cannot deprive my sister and my children of your presence, even for a moment.”

“You shall not meet him unless I am at your elbow,” interrupted the General, with a determined air; “I can be firm, St Helen, as well as you.”

“Ogilvie, Ogilvie, how perfectly useless this is! I do assure you that my mind is fixed unalterably. It cannot be; it shall not be. May I fall at the first fire if I permit you to be on the ground. I could not aim steadily if you were there. No—I have got my man. Darnley will”——

“I hate your *professed* duellists,” interrupted the General, with irrepressible agitation.

“They are made for such an affair as mine!” exclaimed Colonel St Helen, with a kind of cheerfulness that was sickening.

General Ogilvie had never seen such a remarkable change so quickly effected in any one.

"Have you thought of your poor boys?" said he, as they approached home.

"Thank God that my sister is your wife; that you are my brother-in-law!" exclaimed Colonel St Helen, in a more subdued tone than that in which he had been hitherto speaking; "they cannot be better off!"

"This scoundrel has no such ties! You don't meet on equal terms."

"Perhaps not exactly, but—my bullet will spoil his pretty coronet too!"—He paused, and a grim smile passed over his features. "Poor devil," he added, with a bitter air, "I would give a trifle to be present when Major Darnley first calls upon him! It will try his mettle, rather, won't it?" almost laughing—but such a laugh!

"Really, St Helen, this has turned you into a devil!" exclaimed General Ogilvie.

"The best thing that the old Lord Seckington ever did," said Colonel St Helen to himself, but aloud—as if he had not heard his companion's remark, "was to die, exactly when he *did* die; the worst thing that has happened to the new Lord Seckington was, to become Lord Seckington exactly when he *did* become Lord Seckington; and the best thing for me was, that I should come to know of it just when I *did* come to know of it."

"You are certainly, my dear St Helen, the most cruelly injured man breathing," said General Ogilvie, after they had walked for some minutes in silence, "and nobody has a right to interfere with you!"

"I should think not," replied Colonel St Helen, in the same short bitter tones in which he had been all along speaking. "Ogilvie!" he added, turning suddenly, and looking him full in the face, "no treachery! By your

honour as a soldier and a gentleman, no interference in any way ! ”

“ I should have thought that such an appeal was perfectly unnecessary,” replied the General, coldly.

“ Oh, forgive me ! forgive me, Ogilvie ! Remember my sufferings ; I was wrong, I know it.”

“ I have nothing to forgive, St Helen,” replied General Ogilvie, with a quivering lip. “ By my God, I will be true to you in every thing.”

“ And I will be true to myself, Ogilvie.—You shall see ! ” rejoined the Colonel, grasping his hand, and shaking it cordially.—“ And now, what must we say to my sister to prevent suspicion ? ”

“ Oh ! we must say that your ship does not sail for a fortnight, or something of that kind—it will be no difficult thing to deceive *her*, poor thing ! ” said the General, with a deep sigh.

“ Hardy,” said Colonel St Helen, addressing his groom, whom he had sent for as soon as he reached his own room at General Ogilvie’s, and putting two guineas into his hand, “ go directly and station yourself at the corner of — Street, and watch Number —, which is Lord Seckington’s. Say not a word to any body, but be on the look-out night and day ; and the moment that you see a travelling carriage—or any thing of the sort—go up to the door, presently enquire who it is that has come ; and if you hear that it is Lord Seckington, come off to me at the top of your speed—it shall be the best half-hour’s work you ever did in your life—ask quietly—quietly, mind, to see me and tell me your news. To nobody but *me*, sir.”

Hardy was a keen and faithful fellow ; and in about an

hour's time he was to be seen lurking about —— Street, in exact obedience to his master's orders.

What I subsequently learnt from several quarters I may state here, in order to keep up the course of the narrative, and the better to explain the events which remain to be detailed.

I was right in supposing that Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen went direct to the Continent ; but of their movements when there I scarce know any thing. Her wild and frantic agonies of remorse at the step she had taken were scarcely calculated to increase the attachment of her heartless companion, whose satiated eye beheld the beauty which had so long fevered his soul daily disappearing. Even had it been otherwise—had she retained all the fascination and loveliness of her manners, the novelty of the affair had wore off ; he had gained his object—and she perceived his altering feelings. To her guilty affrighted soul, indeed,—

“ The hollow tongue of time ——
—— was a perpetual knell. Each stroke
Pealed for a hope the less ; the funeral note
Of love deep buried without resurrection,
In the grave of possession.”

When he discovered the incurable nature of her mental sufferings,—that whirling her about from one scene of amusement to another failed of its object—he began to complain that his funds were running low. He had, in truth, long been greatly embarrassed and involved,—yet had he contrived to appear possessed of all the wealth and to enjoy all the luxuries and elegancies that penniless young men of fashion so mysteriously secure for them-

selves. Now, however, the money he had obtained from Mrs St Helen, as well as a few hundreds that had been supplied to him by a brother reprobate in order to carry on the intrigue, had almost disappeared. He began to feel himself placed in very awkward circumstances. What is a penniless man of fashion in Paris? Captain Alverley besides was burdened with the perpetual presence of a woman who was weeping bitterly from morning to night—frequently in very violent hysterics—and who vehemently reproached him with being the author of all her misery. He soon began to sicken of all this. Was it for this that he had quitted all the pleasures of London, and lost all his hopes of advancement in the army? Paris was a very pleasant place, and he could have enjoyed himself there but for this unfortunate and—as he soon felt and expressed it—most disgusting affair. He therefore began to loathe the very sight of his miserable companion. It was unquestionably with a feeling of keen regret that he found her brought home one night dripping from the Seine, after an abortive attempt at self-destruction, to which his cold sarcastic repartees had impelled his half-maddened victim. The poor Captain was to be pitied—his bold and dashing adventure had turned out most unfortunately! Instead of the brilliant beauty he had reckoned on having secured for at least a year or two in Mrs St Helen, he beheld it suddenly withered and gone, and there was ever with him a haggard woman, tearing her hair, wringing her hands, and frantically taxing him with being her destroyer. In vain he sought to escape from it—she would never leave him! He had returned to London to endeavour to raise funds; his unlucky encounter with the Commander-in-Chief sent him

back in fury to Paris. He had never felt himself in such an extremity ; and he determined, after much bitter reflection, that could he but once get extricated from this unfortunate adventure, he would never again undertake one on so extensive a scale.

Of a sudden, however, an express from London brought him news that electrified him with delight,—a delight which, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he attempted to communicate to his gloomy companion. By the death of his aged uncle he had become Lord Seckington ; the proprietor of Seckington Castle, in ——— shire ; one or two other houses in different parts of the country ; and a splendid mansion in ——— Street ; with a rent-roll of upwards of £25,000 a-year, and not less than £200,000 in the funds. At the first impulse of his generous feelings he determined to settle upon Mrs St Helen the sum of £500 a-year, which he permitted her to spend wherever she chose—offering to give her a thousand pounds in addition if she would not return to England. She began, however, now to be unreasonable ; and affected to receive his liberal proposal with consternation !

And was it really then possible that, after all he had said, and done, she was not to become Lady Seckington ! Even if Colonel St Helen should take successful proceedings for a divorce ? Horror—horror unutterable !

* * * * *

The next communications that reached Lord Seckington consisted chiefly of pressing entreaties from his solicitor, and that of his lamented uncle, the late Lord Seckington, that he would lose no time in coming to London, as there were many matters requiring his immediate attention. He was glad to see their letters accompanied

with one that bore the handwriting of his intimate friend Captain Leicester. He opened it and read thus,—

“ Dear Seckington—

—Pshaw, how odd it looks ! Of course I congratulate you, as every body does. Don't cut your old friends, that's all. But I write chiefly to say—wait abroad a little, only till the excitement of the thing has a little gone down. That unhappy devil St H—— is in town ; but I hear he's going back to India in double-quick time.

Would it not be as well to wait till he's off, and the coast is clear ?

“ Eternally yours,

“ F. LEICESTER.

“ The Right Hon. Lord Seckington.”

On perusing this well-timed and friendly letter, it suddenly occurred to Lord Seckington that he had certainly various matters of importance to settle in different parts of the Continent ; and so he wrote to his solicitors—ininitely to their astonishment and vexation. He was preparing to set off for Brussels two or three days afterwards, when another letter reached him from the same friendly and vigilant pen.

(*Private.*)

“ London, 8th August, 18—.

“ Dear Seckington,

“ What the deuce is in the wind, perhaps you can better guess than I can tell ; but I lose no time in writing, to say that Colonel St Helen, who had appointed to sail to India (as I told you in my letter of the other day),

and taken leave of every body in a gloomy way, to seek an honourable grave, &c. &c. &c., has suddenly changed his mind, countermanded all his arrangements, and stops in London !! Every one is amazed at this queer move. I have reason to know that he had actually engaged his passage by a ship that started two or three days ago, and has forfeited all the passage-money. This certainly looks cursedly unpleasant—are we to look out for a squall? Do you think he has seen that offensive, impertinent paragraph about you in the papers, and is *waiting for you*? If so, I fear you are in a very awkward predicament, and I really scarce know how to advise you. It will hardly do to keep out of the way a little longer, will it? Ask —, and —, and above all, Count —. Ever yours, more and more,

“ F. L.”

As Lord Seckington read this letter his face gradually became as white as the paper he looked upon. Several letters lay on the table before him unopened and untended to. With Captain Leicester's in his hand, he remained motionless for nearly half-an-hour; at the expiration of which period he was on the point of going into his bedroom and putting the muzzle of a pistol into his ear. Probably what he endured in that brief interval counterbalanced all the pleasure of his whole life. Lord Seckington was a hopeless reprobate, but he was no coward; on the contrary, he was as cool and brave a man as ever wore epaulets. But consider his situation. Here he was, scarce four-and-thirty years old, suddenly become a peer of the realm, having succeeded to a very

ancient title; and with all appliances and means to boot—all that could secure him

“Honour, wealth, obedience—troops of friends”—

in short, occupying as brilliant a position as man could well be placed in: yet amidst all the dazzling prospect that was opened before him, his eye lit and settled upon one fell figure only—that of COLONEL ST HELEN, standing at ten or twelve paces’ distance from him, his outstretched arm steadily pointing a pistol at his head, with deadly purpose and aim unerring. It was perfectly frightful.

What would he have cared for it in the heyday of his career as Captain Alverley; or rather as he was only a few short days before—desperately in debt, driven from the army, disgusted with the presence and stunned with the shrieks of a woman he had long loathed; but now—Perdition! The cold sweat stood upon his brow, and he felt sick to death. *What was to be done?* He could not keep out of the way—the spirit of a man could not endure the idea of such cowardice; no, his coronet should, at all events, never be defiled by the head of a *coward*. So there was no alternative. To London he must go, and that without delay, with the all but certainty that within a few hours of his arrival, Colonel St Helen would have avenged all the wrongs he had suffered by sending a bullet through the head of him who had inflicted them. These were the dreadful thoughts that were passing through his mind, when the spectre stood suddenly before him, Mrs St Helen, who then happened to enter his room—all her beauty gone, a truly lamentable object.

"Well, madam," commenced Lord Seckington, bitterly and fiercely, "I am going to London, to be shot at by your d——d husband. He will certainly kill me; that is, if I do not first"—— The latter part of this fiendish speech was lost upon Mrs St Helen, who had fallen down in a swoon. He immediately summoned assistance into the room, and then quitted it, hastily gathering up his letters; but, by some fatality, leaving behind him the one which had occasioned him his horrible agonies—Captain Leicester's. It fell into the hands of Mrs St Helen's maid, who communicated its direful contents to Mrs St Helen, but not till after Lord Seckington had quitted Paris. He hurried to his bedroom, and after drinking off a large glass of Cogniac, he dressed, and set off to consult with one or two "experienced" friends upon the chief matter that now absorbed his attention—whether the laws of duelling would admit, under the circumstances of his expected meeting with Colonel St Helen, of his shooting at his antagonist, in the first instance; which would afford him, he considered, the only chance he had of saving a life he was just then particularly anxious to preserve.

"You must give him," said Colonel ——, a considerable authority in such matters, "two shots, in my opinion, and even a third, if the first two have had no effect; and then you may do as you will."

"Poh!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, with undisguised trepidation.

"Well," replied the Colonel quietly, "you may say *poh*! if you like, but you asked my opinion, and you have it. I have known it acted upon several times, and never objected to."

"Is your friend a good shot?" enquired Count —, a little fire-eater as ever breathed.

"I should say, in all probability, as good as myself."

The Count shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, that is very bad!—I think you may shoot at your friend at the very first, *by accident*."

"That's not exactly the way matters are settled in England, Count," interrupted Colonel —, sharply; the vivacious Frenchman retorted; one word led on another, and that evening they went through a little duel-scene of their own; Lord Seckington being actually compelled to stand second to his countryman! On returning to his hotel, he found the cards of almost every one of his most distinguished countrymen then resident in Paris lying on his table. He turned sick at heart as he looked upon them. He found that Mrs St Helen was still in a state of insensibility; and he embraced the opportunity it afforded him of preparing for his immediate departure; but not before he had left sufficient funds to provide for her comforts till he could send her further assistance from London, if, indeed, she did not first receive the intelligence of his death. Early in the ensuing morning he set out, with much the same thoughts and feelings as those with which a man might pass through beautiful scenery on his way to the guillotine.

Perhaps it might not be exaggeration to say that he endured the tortures of the damned; and when his post-chaise-and-four drew up opposite the frowning portals of his house in — Street, he stepped out of it pale as death, and scarce able to conceal his agitation from the obsequious menials who lined the hall to receive their

new lord. "How long will they be *mine*!" thought he, and sickened as he thought.

As soon as the bustle of his arrival was over, and while the emptied chaise was being led away from the door, a groom, who might have been observed loitering about the further end of the street, stepped up, gently pulled the area-bell, and enquired if that was Lord Seckington who had arrived? He was rather tartly answered in the affirmative by a bustling servant. The groom sauntered carelessly down the street; but as soon as he had turned the corner, he ran as if a pack of beagles had been at his heels, and scarce ever stopped till he had reached General Ogilvie's. He succeeded in communicating his pregnant intelligence to Colonel St Helen without having excited the suspicion of any one in the house; which Colonel St Helen quitted a few minutes afterwards.

About seven o'clock the same evening a gentleman knocked at the door of Lord Seckington's house. Having been informed that his lordship was very particularly engaged, the stranger gave his card, and desired to be shown into the library, where he would wait his lordship's leisure, as he had a very pressing engagement with him. The servant accordingly ushered him into the library, and took up to Lord Seckington the card of "Major Darnley." He had not long to wait; for in less than five minutes the door was opened, and Lord Seckington entered, in his dressing-gown.

"Major Darnley, I presume?" he enquired, politely advancing towards his visiter, who rose and bowed. Lord Seckington, who looked pale and fatigued with travelling,

apologized for his delay in attending the Major, and also for his dress, on the score of his having not yet had time to change it.

"I need only mention the name of Colonel St Helen, my Lord," said Major Darnley, in a low tone, "to apprise your Lordship of the very painful nature of my errand."

"Certainly—I perfectly understand," replied Lord Seckington, rather hastily.

"Of course, my Lord, the sooner this affair is settled, the better"——

"By all means," replied Lord Seckington, calmly. "I have no doubt that my friend, Captain Leicester, whom I know to be in town, will act with you immediately on my behalf. Probably he is this moment at ——'s, where you could hardly fail of meeting him," looking at his watch.

"Perhaps your Lordship will favour me with a line addressed to Captain Leicester, intimating the nature of my application?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Lord Seckington; and sitting down, he wrote a few lines to the desired effect, and folding up the note, directed it, and gave it to Major Darnley.

"Probably Captain Leicester will be with your Lordship shortly; shall I tell him that your Lordship waits here for him?"

"I beg you will do me that favour. Pray, Major Darnley, let no time whatever be lost," added Lord Seckington, with a smile which it would have been a luxury to a fiend to witness. He rang the bell, and Major Darnley took his leave. The instant that the door was closed,

Lord Seckington, after a sickening glance round at the spacious and splendid apartment, threw himself upon the sofa in a state of mind that it would be in vain to attempt describing.

Having agreed to dine that evening with one of his old friends who had succeeded to a dukedom since they had met, and who had quitted Lord Seckington only half an hour before Major Darnley's arrival, it became necessary to write off immediately, and announce his inability to be present. He did so, and stated it to be owing to very pressing engagements, and the thought which had since occurred to him that he ought not to dine out till after his uncle's funeral—well knowing that his own funeral might probably take place at the same time!—It may be easily understood that he was in no humour to renew the business-details which Major Darnley's arrival had interrupted. He sent a message to that effect up stairs to his solicitor, to whom he had promised to return, begging him to be in attendance in the morning; and ordering dinner to be prepared and served at a moment's notice, he again threw himself upon the sofa. He was roused from his dreadful reverie about a quarter before eight o'clock by Captain Leicester, who was in full dinner-dress, having been met by Major Darnley, just as he was preparing to go to the Duke of ——'s, where he was to have been surprised by the appearance of Lord Seckington. After his hurried interview with Major Darnley, he had come off direct to —— Street.

"Well, Alverley,—Seckington, I mean,—you see it's just as I suspected," said he, hastily stepping up to Lord Seckington.

"Yes," replied his Lordship, shaking him cordially by

the hand, and unconsciously sighing. "May I reckon on your services?"

"Oh, of course—I am here on the business now."

"Where were you going when Major Darnley found you?" enquired Lord Seckington, alluding to Captain Leicester's dress.

"The Duke of ——'s."

"Ah, I was to have been there too," said Lord Seckington. "They'll suspect that something's wrong by our both so suddenly sending refusals."

"And let them—they're not likely to send us peace-officers, if they *do* suspect!—They'll only be devilish sorry to lose the company of two deuced good knives and forks—that's all!"

"I have ordered dinner here to be ready at a moment's notice," said Lord Seckington, as the servant brought in candles. He *must* have observed the troubled and pallid countenance of his Lord as he placed them upon the table near which Lord Seckington and Captain Leicester were standing. "You *can* stay to dinner?"

"I think, perhaps, I have half-an-hour to spare," replied Captain Leicester,—for duellists, like lovers, *must* eat, it would seem:—"but I can't spare one second more, for I've engaged to meet Darnley at ——'s by a quarter to nine o'clock." Lord Seckington rang, and ordered dinner to be served immediately.

"This blood-thirsty devil, St Helen," said Lord Seckington, as the servant closed the door, "must have been watching for my arrival—Major Darnley was with me in less than an hour after I had got into the house."

"Very probably. No doubt he had hired some fellow to lurk about and bring him word of your arrival. You

know, my dear fellow," added Captain Leicester, "there's no disguising the thing; we are likely to have sharp work on our hands in the morning."

"The morning? I shall go mad if I have to wait all through the night!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, vehemently—"D——n me if I could not infinitely prefer fighting to-night—why could it not be at ——'s? You could easily manage it, Leicester. You really must arrange it so! I shan't have a chance, if we wait till the morning!"

"You know, it can't be done," replied Captain Leicester, quietly, as soon as Lord Seckington had ceased—"it's not *selon la règle*—there's a method in every thing, and duelling is nothing without it. Darnley would laugh at me if I proposed it."

"Well, I am of course in your hands. You must do as you think proper," said Lord Seckington, with a sigh.

"I'll parade you—let me see—Five, or six o'clock—either will do," said Captain Leicester, thoughtfully. "However, we shall discuss every thing fully to-night at ——'s."

"Did you ever know of such an unhappy devil as I am, Leicester?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, abruptly, walking to and fro—"just now, to be shot!"

"Ay, and for such a cause, that's the ugly part of the story—but what does that signify? 'Twas an adventure carried on with the utmost spirit—you could not *command* success, you know—eh? isn't that the word?"

"It's d——d hard to part with all this!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, sadly, pointing to the fine library.

"Hell must be a joke to what *I've* suffered since I got your last letter."

"I thought it would have that effect, when I was writing it. But,"—shrugging his shoulders,—"*the thing's* done now, and you must try not to think of it. 'Tis worse than useless. Make your will, and snap your fingers at every thing and every body in the world. That's the way a man of sense and spirit should meet death, and then he conquers it!—By the way, if you *were* to make your will it might be as well. There's an infernal heap of money in the funds, you know"——

"O Leicester, don't torment me!" interrupted Lord Seckington, writhing with agony. "I shall do what is proper, you may depend upon it."

"Well, my dear fellow, don't take it ill. 'Tis no more than every second should do for his principal when he expects warm work! Of course, St Helen, you know, will do his best to hit you; but after all there's no *certainty*, even with the deadliest shot in the world."

"Oh, curse the ——!" groaned Lord Seckington, coupling Mrs St Helen's name with the vilest epithet that could be applied to a woman.

"No, no, Seckington—you forget yourself. I call that very unhandsome—nay, it's ungrateful—it's d——d bad taste!"—said Captain Leicester, seriously.

"You should only know the kind of life she's led me since we went abroad!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, vehemently.

"Poor devil, you ought not to speak of her in that way," said Captain Leicester, with a grave air of displeasure. "Pray remember, Seckington, that whatever

she is, you have made her. It is not handsome to speak so of the woman that has denied you nothing, and lost every thing for your sake—I don't like to hear you talk so—I don't, indeed !”

“ Well,” exclaimed Lord Seckington, after walking violently to and fro—“ I suppose I *may* say that I wish I had been in ——— before I had ever seen her.”

“ Ah, yes—quite another matter ; but we mustn't have any thing unkind said of poor pretty Mrs St Helen.”

“ Pretty ! By ———, you should see her now ! Pretty !”

“ Well—but I hope you have settled something handsome on her ?”

“ Five hundred a-year”——

“ Devilish liberal, certainly. Would she speak to me if we met at Paris ?”

Lord Seckington made no reply, but, with his arms folded, kept walking to and fro, heaving heavy sighs.

“ Take my advice, Seckington—make a brave effort, and throw it all off your mind. It *can* do you no good, it *will* do you infinite harm. Fancy yourself plain Charles Alverley—the dodged of duns—drop ‘ my Lord,’—think nothing of your rent-roll or your funded property ; they'll be all the more delightful if you escape to-morrow ! Why do you provoke your fate ? Hope for the best. Depend upon it you're too good a fellow to be ordered off just in the nick of time—oh, it's impossible !”

Lord Seckington grasped his hands and looked unutterable things.

“ You know, Leicester, it is not *death* that I *care* for, come how or when it may,” said he, “ I'm a little *above that*, I should hope.”

"Don't fear *Bogy*, then, eh?" interrupted Captain Leicester, with a smile.

"Pshaw!—But, by the way, what am I to do? How often am I to receive his fire?"

"Ah, *I've* been considering that point, a little. Why, I think—twice."

"And I"——

"Fire wide the first time, of course"——

"But I don't think it is quite such a matter *of course*, Leicester."

"Oh, nonsense, it's clear as daylight—trust me."

"Really it's devilish hard—he'll try to take my life.—It's throwing away my only chance. It's going out to be clean murdered!"

"Seckington, put yourself into my place. You know that what I say is the correct thing.—It must be so, or *I* am not responsible. If nothing happens, of course he'll demand another shot; and then, you may perhaps—hem!—I don't say what *you* ought to do, but I think I know what *I* should do.—And the same if a third is asked for."

"Why the devil does not the fellow announce dinner?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, violently pulling the bell.

"Hush—don't be so feverish. He announced it five minutes ago—I've been on the move ever since—I've now only a quarter of an hour."

Here the servant made his appearance, and Lord Seckington in silence followed his companion to the dining-room. Both of them cast one significant glance at the splendour of the sideboard display—and, indeed, of every thing about them.

"The first time you have ever done the honours

here, I presume?" said Captain Leicester, as he took his seat.

"It is probably the *last*," thought Lord Seckington. Alas! what would he have given at that moment to undo what he had done—to have begun nothing of which he had not well considered the end—never to have blasted the happy home of his brave brother-soldier—to escape from the mortal thralldom he was now enduring! Perhaps, had he been calm enough, a lesson of his earlier days might have recurred to him before the fearful lesson of the ensuing morning!

"Audire est operæ pretium, procedere rectè
Qui mœchis non vultis—ut omni parte laborent!
Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,
Atque hæc rara, cadat dura inter sæpe pericla!" *

It was settled by the seconds that the meeting should take place at five o'clock on the ensuing morning, in Battersea Fields, and as both of them anticipated its turning out a desperate affair, they made all necessary arrangements to meet contingencies, providing for the instant flight of the survivor and themselves—or, it might be—of themselves alone—in the event of any thing fatal occurring. Two experienced surgeons also were in attendance. Their arrangements, in short, were admirably made, for they were both of them somewhat experienced in such affairs. Within a very few moments of each other's arrival were the two hostile parties in the field. Both Colonel St Helen and Lord Seckington were very finely-made men, and of a most gentlemanlike appearance. The former was dressed in

* Hor. Sat. Lib. I. Sat. ii.

"I presume you are now satisfied?" enquired Captain Leicester.

"Certainly not," replied Major Darnley. "I must insist upon a third shot."

"I really cannot permit it"——

"Load again!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, in a low tone, with a sullen reckless air; and the seconds resumed their gloomy functions.

A third time their principals stood awaiting their signal, and as the word "Fire!" escaped from the lips of Major Darnley, both were observed taking deliberate aim. Well Colonel St Helen knew it was his last chance—that another shot could not be allowed; and Lord Seckington was of course aware of what was passing through his adversary's breast. Neither fired till a second or two after the word had been uttered, when their pistols flashed together, and Lord Seckington sprung upwards, and instantly lay extended upon the ground. Colonel St Helen's ball appeared to have passed through the head of his opponent, while he himself, still convulsively grasping his weapon, remained standing, looking silently and grimly at his prostrate antagonist.

"Fly! For God's sake, fly!" exclaimed Major Darnley, looking towards Colonel St Helen from beside the insensible figure of Lord Seckington.

"Is he killed?" whispered Colonel St Helen, as Major Darnley rushed up to him, repeating his entreaties.

"Yes—yes—I fear he is," replied the Major. "Why, St Helen! St Helen! Are *you* hit?"—Rushing forward, he caught the Colonel in his arms, and both fell together on the ground.

The surgeon who had accompanied him to the field

for a moment by his extraordinary insolence, "if you don't instantly leave this room, sir"——

"Ah, ma'am, leave the room? Pray, ma'am, are you mistress here? I leave the room, ma'am? You will leave it first, ma'am, I can tell you, if it comes to that—that's flat!" he continued, pushing wider open the door. "Do you think, ma'am, I'm going to be talked to in this way by you? I know who you are, ma'am, quite well! Do you think I hadn't my eyes and my ears open at Paris? My Lord's done the handsome thing by you, and you ought not to come following him about the town in this way; ah, ma'am, you may look, but I fancy my Lord's done with you; he's got other fish to fry just now—believe me." At that moment a vehicle was heard approaching rapidly, and a hubbub in the hall drew the valet thither. "Drive away that chaise!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices in the street, and Lord Seckington's carriage dashed up to the door. Mrs St Helen sprung to the window, hearing her chaise ordered away, expecting some new insult was preparing for her; and beheld the miserable figure of Lord Seckington in the act of being carried out of the carriage, his head covered over with a blood-spotted white handkerchief. She rushed from the dining-room, and, with a piercing shriek, was flying down the steps, when one of the agitated servants accidentally tripped her foot, and she fell with her forehead upon the corner of one of the steps, where she lay insensible and disregarded till Lord Seckington had been carried in, when the hall door was closed. There she *might* have continued, but for the humanity of one or two persons in the crowd that had gathered round Lord Seckington's carriage. They raised her from the ground; and having been informed from the

"Yes—no," replied the affrighted porter in a breath. "Do you know any thing about his lordship?" By this time the valet, who had accompanied him to France and had returned with him, made his appearance, and whispered to the porter, who then, in a somewhat less respectful tone, enquired, "Does his lordship expect you, ma'am?"

"No, my lord does not, I can answer for that," interposed the valet; "he thinks you're at this moment in Paris."

"Silence, sir! show me instantly into the dining-room," said the lady, as indignantly as her violent agitation would admit of.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the porter, placing himself between her and the dining-room door, "I—I cannot admit you! Are you a relation of his lordship's, or what? What's your business here?"

"Hinder me at your peril, sirrah!" exclaimed Mrs St Helen—for she it was, with all her naturally commanding tone and manner; and at the same time pushing him gently aside, without further opposition she entered the dining-room.

"Order in my maid from the chaise!" said Mrs St Helen, sinking exhausted in the nearest chair, scarce able to stand, or to see whether her orders were attended to. There was a sudden muster of servants in the hall for a few moments; and after a hurried conversation together, the dining-room door was opened by the valet.

"I hope, ma'am, you won't make it necessary, ma'am, for us to do our duty. I know, ma'am, who you are," he commenced with a determined air.

"Audacious wretch!" exclaimed Mrs St Helen, roused

firmly attended him, only that the present was more serious attack, and the probabilities of its termination infinitely greater. All our efforts to relieve his suffering brain proved unavailing, and we all gave up in despair. On the Saturday evening after having dined with Lord Seckington, I was returning on horseback from a visit to a distant patient residing about ten miles beyond General Ogilvie's house, and determined on the way to enquire after Colonel St Helen, if he were well. When within a few yards of the house, I saw two men carrying a coffin on their backs. I knew my horse—my conjectures were right—they opened General's gate, and went up to the house. So it was all over! Poor, broken-hearted St Helen, the darling of the petticoat of the wife of your bosom,—of the wife of your brother-soldier, your sorrows were at an end. After passing for a few moments I dismounted, and, desiring him to enquire whether they were well. The General sent back word that he was well, and I dismounted. He then, with the utmost grief, visible in his countenance and manner, told me the event that had taken place. I followed him into the room he had occupied, and we sat down together. Colonel St Helen expired that day about twelve o'clock—only a few hours after I had been with him. "He lay," said the General, "in the same state in which you left him, almost dead in a full stupor. I was sitting on one side of the bed, and Mrs Ogilvie, contrary to my wishes—see me in excessive agitation—entered the room I had a little while before occupied upon her quitting, and resumed the seat she had before occupied on the bedside. The noise she

seemed to rouse him slightly from his lethargy. He slowly opened his eyes—the first time during his illness—looked dully at her; I think his lips seemed to move, and on bending my ear till it almost touched them, I think I heard the word ‘Emma!’ His head sank back upon the pillow, he breathed heavily for a moment or two, and St Helen was no more! No doubt,” continued the General, with great emotion, “he had a confused notion that it was Mrs St Helen who was sitting beside him—alas that such a polluted being should have troubled his last thoughts! Yet there seemed no anger or disgust in his manner—if it had any character at all it was one of forgiveness!”

He was buried at —; and there was scarcely an officer of distinction in London that did not insist upon following him to the grave. The kind-hearted Commander-in-Chief shed tears, I understood, when he heard of his death. He bequeathed his fortune to his children equally, leaving General and Mrs Ogilvie their guardians, whom he also empowered to allow Mrs St Helen, should she ever require it, such a sum as would place her out of the reach of destitution. The will was dated only the day before that on which he fought with Lord Seckington.

I regret to have to mention that name again, and shall dismiss it briefly and for ever. I did not attend him, but heard several details concerning him from those who did. It would perhaps have been mercy had Colonel St Helen’s ball passed into his brain and deprived him of life on the spot. It had utterly destroyed the nasal bones—and it is impossible to conceive a more repulsive object than he must have presented to every beholder during the remainder of his days. He endured intolerable agony for many

formerly attended him, only that the present was a far more serious attack, and the probabilities of its fatal termination infinitely greater. All our efforts to relieve the labouring brain proved unavailing, and we all gave up the case in despair. On the Saturday evening after his fatal meeting with Lord Seckington, I was returning on horseback from a visit to a distant patient residing about two miles beyond General Ogilvie's house, and determined to call in to enquire after Colonel St Helen, if he yet survived. When within a few yards of the house, I overtook two men carrying a coffin on their backs. I stopped my horse—my conjectures were right—they opened the General's gate, and went up to the house. So it was at length all over! Poor, broken-hearted St Helen, victim of the perfidy of the wife of your bosom,—of the villany of your brother-soldier, your sorrows were at length ended. After pausing for a few moments I despatched my groom, desiring him to enquire whether they wished to see me. The General sent back word that he particularly desired to see me, and I dismounted. He met me at the door, and with the utmost grief, visible in his countenance and manner, told me the event that had taken place. I followed him into the room he had just quitted, and we sat down together. Colonel St Helen expired that day about twelve o'clock—only an hour after I had been with him. "He lay," said the General, "in the same state in which you left him, almost to the last, in a dull stupor. I was sitting on one side of the bed, and Mrs Ogilvie, contrary to my wishes—seeing her excessive agitation—entered the room I had a little before insisted upon her quitting, and resumed the seat she had before occupied on the bedside. The noise she made

heart aches as I recall them,—but my long labours now draw to a close.

General and Mrs Ogilvie, with their little precious charges—for precious they were, and they were themselves childless—withdrew, in about a twelvemonth after Colonel St Helen's death, to a remote part of England, where they might attend exclusively and unremittingly to the important and interesting duties confided in them. Their departure, and the endless absorbing engagements of a busy professional life in the metropolis, caused the gloomy transactions above narrated gradually to disappear from my memory, which, however, they had long and grievously haunted. Three years afterwards, there occurs the following entry in my Diary :—

“ Wednesday, 8th October, 18—.”

* * But I shall endeavour to describe the scene exactly as it appeared to me.—May experience never enable me to describe such another !

“ Hush ! stand here, Dr ——,” whispered Mr B——, the proprietor of an extensive private asylum near the metropolis, where I had called to visit a gentleman who had been long a patient of mine. “ Hush, don't speak, nor be at all alarmed,” opening a small, and as it seemed to me, a secret door,—“ these are my *incurables*. Hark ! I think I know what they are about. Step forward, here. Can you see ?” I did as he directed. From my position I could not see very distinctly, but the room was long and rather narrow, and had a resemblance to a ward in a hospital, with about half-a-dozen beds on each side of the room, on which were sitting as many boys, appa-

rently from about fifteen to eighteen years old, wearing long blue dresses, and their hair cut as close to their heads as possible. They were making all manner of discordant noises, and seemed eagerly talking together, but each remained sitting quietly on his own bed; a circumstance I mentioned to Mr B——, expressing my surprise that so eager and violent as their gestures seemed, they should not quit their beds. "It would be very strange if they *could*," he whispered with a smile, "for they are all fastened to a staple in the wall, by a strong girdle passing round their waists. Bless your life! if it was not for that, they would soon kill one another, and every body that came near them. It was only last month that one of them contrived to twist herself"——

"*Herself!*" I whispered in amazement; "what do you mean, Mr B——?"

"Why, what I say, Doctor, surely—are not you aware that these are women?"

"Gracious God, *women!*" I exclaimed, with a perfect shudder.

"Why, certainly! But, by the way, they don't look much like women either; that close cut hair of theirs is so like the head of a charity schoolboy!—Some of these wretched people have been, and in point of family are, highly respectable. It may appear very shocking to you to see them in this condition; it was so to me until I grew accustomed to it. I assure you we use no unnecessary violence or restraint whatever; but, on the contrary, give them every indulgence their unfortunate condition will admit of. What can we do with them?"

There are several of them perfect fiends if they have the slightest license. I was obliged to have this room constructed on purpose apart from the rest of my establishment, their noises were so dreadful ;—now hark !”

“ Whoo—whoo—whoo”—shrieked a voice louder than any of the rest, “ who’ll go to the moon ? who’ll go to the moon ? who’ll go to the moon ?”

“ I—I’ve got it !” shouted another—“ Poll ! Poll ! what have you done with the moon ?”

“ I go for the stars—the stars ! Whirr ! whirr ! whirr !—Away ! away ! away !” cried another.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !—Ha, ha, ha !” said another voice, bursting into loud laughter, “ I’ve got a dog in my head—hark, how it barks—bow, wow, wow !—Ha—ha—ha !”

“ I’ve got a cat—mew !—mew !—mew ! who’ll catch the mouse ? I feel it—mew !”

“ Water ! water ! water ! The world’s on fire !—Fire, fire, fire !”

“ Hush, you wretches,” exclaimed another voice, “ I’m going to sing for my dinner—hush ! hark !”

“ Hark ! the song—the song !” cried all the other voices together, while the singer began ; and in a few moments her voice only was heard, wild and dismal beyond description, though not very loud, uttering words something like the following :—

“ Hark to the bell, the merry, merry, merry bell,
It is his knell,—the merry, merry, knell”—

“ Ding, dong !—Ding, dong !—Ding dong !”

—sung the other voices in a kind of doleful chorus.
The singer resumed—

" Lullaby ! Lullaby ! Lullaby !
His head, oh, his head it is white—
All white ! white !
—Dead, dead, dead !

—Sing, you wretches ! " They resumed—

" Ding, dong !—Ding, dong !—Ding, dong ! "

The sun at that moment shone into the dreary room, while I was intently gazing on the miserable scene it disclosed. Mercy !—my flesh crept—I began to recognise in the singer, who occasionally looked wildly up into the sunshine—I could not be wrong—Mrs St Helen !

" Who is that ? " I enquired faintly, turning away from the room, while my companion closed and secured the door.

" Mrs Jones is the performer, if it's she whom you mean."

" Oh no, no, no ! Her name is not, it never was Jones !" said I, feeling very faint, and moving as quickly away as possible into the open air.

" Well, certainly," said Mr B——, after considering a little, " it is strange enough ; I have certainly now and then heard her mention *your* name, among others. So you know, very probably, her real name,—Mrs St Helen ? "

He mentioned the name I dreaded to hear.

" I have had her these two years ; she was removed hither from St ——'s by order of a General Ogilvie, whom perhaps you know, at whose expense she continues here."

I got into the open air, and began at length to breathe more freely. I protest that I never in my life encoun-

tered such a shock as that I had just experienced. He told me many sad, shocking things, which I shall not record.

Oh ! merciful and just God, governor of the world, sometimes even in this life thy most tremendous wrath alights upon the heads of the guilty !

THE END.

